A DELINEATION OF THE NATURE and OBLIGATION OF MORALITY.

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NATURE and OBLIGATION

OF

MORALITY.

WITH

REFLEXIONS upon Mr HUME's Book, intitled, *An Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.*

The SECOND EDITION.

Cum ita cohærentia, connexa, concatenata sint, ut, nisi divinitatis rationem diligenter excusseris, nescias humanitatis; nec possis pulchre gerere rem civilem, nisi cognoveris hanc communem omnium mundi civitatem. MIN. FELIX.

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ERRATA.

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ADVETISEMENT.

THE Author having been induced, by the advice of ſome friends, to republiſh the following eſſay, thought it his duty to reviſe it with proper care and attention; and to remove at leaſt ſome of thoſe imperfections, as well as typographical errors, which appeared in the firſt edition.

HE has thought proper to add the Appendix, concerning the uſe of reaſon and ſentiment in morals.

THIS partly determined him to reduce the concluſion within a narrower compaſs, which is alſo entirely altered as to its form. There are no other alterations of any great conſequence.

As philoſophical ſubjects, eſpecially in the preſent age, need all the advantages of eloquence and agreeable compoſition, to engage the peruſal and attention of the reader; the Author would have been pleaſed, if ſome perſon better qualified in theſe reſpects, had prevented this labour; and thinks, that his principal deſign would thereby have been more effectually obtained.

ADVERTISEMENT.

DELINEATION
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OF
MORALITY.

SECT. I.

General Obſervations concerning Morality.

MORALITY is a ſubject the moſt intereſting that can employ the faculties of the human mind; for, upon right notions, and a ſuitable practice of it, our happineſs chiefly depends; and that whether we are conſidered as individuals, or conjoined in ſociety with others: this ſubject, therefore, merits well to be conſidered with the ſtricteſt attention, and moſt impartial regard.

IT has however unluckily been the fate of Morality, to be involved in more confuſion, and perplexed with greater difficulties, than perhaps any ſcience whatever. This effect will ſcarcely be accounted for ſatisfactorily, from the com-

mon allegations of the imperfection and imbecillity of the human underſtanding; other more ſpecial cauſes, very probably, muſt concur.

INDEED, the complex and extenſive nature of the ſubject itſelf, cannot here fail to claim our obſervation: for, it is the province of Morality, firſt to aſcertain that, in which our chief happineſs conſiſts, and then to diſcover all thoſe means, which may direct us in the purſuit, and ſecure us in the poſſeſſion of it. This view of things naturally preſents us with a large field, where men may take a thouſand different roads, and form as many notions of their particular good, as are the numberleſs methods they may purſue, in order to attain it.

THE whole of the human heart muſt here be laid open, the temper and affections muſt be nicely examined, and our natural connections with other beings, as well as our relations to moral agents, muſt be brought under our review. When ſuch a variety of objects crowd upon the mind, it is no wonder if we are in danger of being miſled by falſe appearances of things.

FROM much the ſame cauſe proceeds another ſource of error, tho' of a more external nature. Our moral ideas eſpecially, are ſo numerous, and ſo variouſly modified, that it is impoſſible to find words properly to diſtinguiſh theſe ſeveral ideas,

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and far leſs their different modes; we are therefore obliged often to uſe the ſame word, in a great many different ſenſes: by this we are in danger of changing the ſtate of the caſe, whereby we muſt be led into falſe concluſions from ſpecious reaſonings, eſpecially where the chain of ſuch reaſonings may run out to any conſiderable length.

But perhaps nothing contributes more to perplex and embarraſs Morality, than the prejudices which ariſe from our own minds. There is a ſenſible and apparent derangement and diſorder of our paſſions and affections, which are far from being properly balanced, and duly proportioned to the nature of thoſe objects by which they are excited. Theſe irregular paſſions, therefore, by recommending too much there favourite objects, create a ſtrong bias upon the mind, which makes us very willing to reconcile, and accommodate a ſcheme of Morality to the bent of paſſion, and falſe view of intereſt, rather than to inveſtigate it with an open candour, and a ſincere regard to truth. It is no wonder then, if ſuch an unfair procedure, miſleads us into falſe opinions, and a wrong conduct.

But in whatever way the difficulties of Morality may be accounted for, they cannot be entirely diſſembled. So ſenſible were ſome of the

ancient philoſophers of theſe difficulties, that they thought a revelation from heaven was neceſſary to give us proper inſtruction in our duty: nay, they carried this opinion ſo far as to believe, that ſuch revelation was a neceſſary voucher for the doctrine of a divine providence; and that, without it, all the arguments deduced from the admirable ſtructure and wiſe arrangement of every part of the viſible world, were not ſufficient fully to ſupport that doctrine. This evidently appears, from a converſation betwixt Socrates and Ariſtodemus concerning providence; of which Xenophon, in his Memoirs of Socrates, gives us a particular account.

BUT, notwithſtanding the difficulties which we may meet with in moral diſquiſitions, it is at leaſt certain, that the difference betwixt virtue and vice is ſtrongly founded in nature. This difference is ſenſibly felt, and readily acknowledged, at leaſt by the generality of mankind. A reflection upon this indiſputable phenomenon, may give great encouragement in our inquiries concerning virtue.

WHAT we propoſe at preſent, is not to enter much into particulars, but only to make ſome general obſervations, in order to diſcover the native excellence of virtue, and to point out the particular force of its obligation; from whence,

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at leaſt, the great lines of duty may appear in a clear light.

In the firſt place, it may be taken for granted, that private happineſs (conſidered in its full extent) muſt be the chief end and object of every man's purſuit; this the ancient philoſophers univerſally agreed in, and made it their firſt inquiry in what the *ſummum bonum*, or chief happineſs of man, conſiſted. This appears to be a principle that forces itſelf upon the mind with an irreſiſtible evidence; for it is no leſs than a contradiction to ſuppoſe, that we can deſire, or be pleaſed with any thing, preferably to our chief happineſs; that is, to that which, in its nature, muſt be the moſt pleaſing and deſirable of all things elſe.

Let us ſuppoſe a man ſo conſtituted, as to have more pleaſure in the contemplation of the happineſs of another being, than in the contemplation of his own; even that very pleaſure, is really his own proper happineſs; and ſelf-love would, in this caſe, prompt him chiefly to purſue the happineſs of that other being.

On the other hand, it is the allowed characteriſtick of virtue, ſocial virtue (which we are chiefly to conſider) that it prompts us to purſue the happineſs of others, with whom we live in

ſociety, preferably to every other object, which affords us private pleaſure, or gratification.

THESE two principles are in their nature very different, and may readily claſh, and interfere with one another; eſpecially as there are a thouſand objects, beſide the good of others, calculated to give us pleaſure, and to gratify ſome correſpondent paſſion or principle in our nature.

THE cauſe of virtue therefore cannot be ſupported, without ſhewing that ſuch is the conſtitution of things, that the good of others, duly purſued, is an object, which, upon the whole, affords more true happineſs, than what ariſes from any, or every other private gratification beſides.

ARISTOTLE ſeems to have been abundantly ſenſible of the truth of what we have here aſſerted; and therefore, in his ninth book of ethics, he condemns ſelf-love when it directs to the purſuit of riches, honours, pleaſures, or ſuch external things, in which we may interfere with the intereſts of other men: but he approves of the ſame principle, when it leads to the purſuit of virtue, and the good of others; and obſerves, that a man thereby purſues his trueſt intereſt, and yet is not, upon that account, denominated ſelfiſh.

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Let us in the mean time ſuppoſe, what we ſhall afterwards endeavour to prove, that virtue is our trueſt happineſs. To this idea of virtue, it may be objected, that it is contrary to a common character aſcribed to it, *viz.* that it is diſintereſted. But there appears no great difficulty in removing this objection; for, in reality, it muſt be acknowledged true, that virtue purſues and promotes our beſt intereſt; were it otherwiſe, how would it be poſſible to recommend it to the eſteem and purſuit of mankind? And even my Lord Shaftſbury, Dr Hutcheſon, and others who have talked biggeſt of the diſintereſtedneſs of virtue, have ever been obliged to ſupport their ſcheme, by the conſideration of theſe purer joys, and ſuperior delights which ariſe from the immediate gratification of the kind and virtuous affections.

The intereſt therefore meant, and ſuppoſed as derogatory to virtue, is not the ſelf enjoyment which attends a virtuous action, or the ſatisfaction naturally conſequent upon it; but it is an intereſt of quite a different kind: for example, when a man does an action materially good, not from the love of goodneſs, but for the ſake of a bribe, the action is ſaid to be ſelfiſh, and intereſted, becauſe it flows from a motive which regards ſelf love alone, and is quite indifferent to the good of others; and the ſame bribe

bribe would probably have prompted ſuch a man, to do the contrary bad action.

We may obſerve further, that when virtue is ſaid to be our trueſt intereſt, this is not always to be confined to the immediate pleaſures of virtue, but muſt, at leaſt ſometimes, relate to a diſtant good which it has in view. For it is certain, that virtue often engages us in hardſhips, toils and difficulties; it has often ſtrong paſſions to mortify and ſubdue: whereas, on the other hand, vice frequently inſinuates itſelf with an immediate ſmile, and tempts us with preſent gratifications, often too flattering and deluſive.

It appears therefore evident, that, to judge of theſe two rivals, only from the preſent good they ſet before us, without attending to their diſtant conſequences, muſt be apparently dangerous, and diſadvantageous to the cauſe of virtue. If it be a proper recommendation of virtue, that it gives us ſatisfaction in the mean time, it cannot juſtly be thought inconſiſtent with its nature, that it ſecures to us good in reverſion. Virtue is not a blind and inſtantaneous inſtinct, but an enlightened principle which naturally looks forwards, and weighs the diſtant conſequences of actions, and things; and is therefore very properly influenced by views of diſtant good.

INDEED, in order to maintain the dignity and excellence of virtue, we muſt take care what no tion we form of that happineſs, which ſhe propoſes to us in reverſion; it muſt be entirely conſiſtent with its nature, or flow from its immediate exerciſe; we ſhould conceive of it as an improved and exalted ſtate, by which virtue may have a nobler, a more free and extenſive influence, and operation. Such a pure and ſublime idea of happineſs, muſt effectually engage our purſuit, and eſtabliſh virtue upon the moſt firm and ſolid foundation.

BUT it may ſtill be objected, that the ſcheme we have laid down, does not agree to the whole of human nature: It appears to reſolve all into ſelf-love; whereas, we have other affections, particularly benevolence, which leads to the good of others, as an object, or end, entirely independent of ſelf-love. This is no doubt true, tho' not peculiar to benevolence; the ſame thing may be ſaid of the love of power, honour, or even of any ſenſible object that yields us gratification and delight.

THE pleaſures ariſing from theſe affections, or paſſions, are not created by ſelf-love, but depend upon the original frame and conſtitution of our nature. But then theſe pleaſures once ſuppoſed, become the object of ſelf-love; that is, the mind, by attending to what it feels, or reflecting upon

upon what it has felt within itſelf, eſtimates the quantity of pleaſure and delight ariſing from the gratification of the ſeveral affections; and wherever it diſcovers the higheſt pleaſure, it muſt give the preference to that affection, and the object exciting it.

In conſequence of this, benevolence can only be preferred to other affections, where we ſuppoſe it affords us higher pleaſure than theſe.

This Dr Hutcheſon is ſenſible of, when he ſays, "The ſuſpicions againſt virtue, muſt be "entirely removed, if we have a moral ſenſe, "and public affections, whoſe gratifications are "conſtituted by nature, our moſt intenſe and "durable pleaſures." How far, or in what reſpects this is, or may be the caſe, we may afterwards have occaſion to conſider.

In the mean time, it is abundantly evident, from what has been ſaid, that the benevolent ſcheme is ſo far from contradicting the principle of ſelf-happineſs laid down, that it amounts to a proof and confirmation of it. For it would be impoſſible immediately to ſupport the cauſe of virtue and benevolence, without proving the pleaſures thence ariſing, to be ſuperior to the gratifications of other paſſions and affections.

It may be ſhortly obſerved, that when ſelf-love is thus engaged in ſupport of benevolence, the natural object of our affection is not at all changed, it is ſtill the good of others we purſue; and by means of this additional principle, we are animated to purſue it with greater conſtancy and delight.

By a proper reflection upon the obſervations already made, we may be able to diſcover how virtue leads to happineſs, and yet in what reſpect it may be called diſintereſted; and we may thereby get clear of a great deal of confuſion, with which this ſubject has been perplexed.

We ſhall now proceed to conſider the general nature of virtue, how far it is eſtabliſhed in the human frame and conſtitution of things, and upon what the peculiar force of its obligation depends.

Moral writers, even the ancients, though not with the ſame preciſion as the moderns, have deduced the firſt principles of virtue, from the moral ſenſe; a ſenſe, which immediately repreſents a certain temper and conduct, in a light peculiarly beautiful: And by this repreſentation of things, virtue is naturally recommended to our approbation and purſuit.

THIS appears to be the firſt ſource of virtue, evidently founded in the frame and conſtitution of man. But then, as it is an immediate ſenſe, a kind of natural inſtinct, it is not in itſelf ſufficient to ſupport the cauſe of virtue, or to give it a ſuperior ſtrength and command. For it is to be obſerved, that, beſides the moral ſenſe, and thoſe affections which appear chiefly to co-operate with it, there are various inſtincts and paſſions in the human frame, which lead to objects of a very different nature. Theſe, experience informs us, are often more ſtrong and impetuous, and conſequently in an immediate competition, muſt prevail over the moral ſenſe, and its correſpondent affections, and entirely fruſtrate their happier influence. It is therefore neceſſary, to bring additional aid to virtue, from other principles of our nature. And the principle which diſtinguiſhes the human mind, which is the conſpicuous and peculiar ornament of its nature, and the ſource of all its improvement, is the power of reaſoning and reflection.

THE inferior animals ſeem to be governed, by certain inſtincts, appetites and paſſions; theſe are to them the chief principles of action, and guide them to their deſtined goal, by an immediate, regular and uniform impulſe. But the caſe is very different with regard to man, if his actions were abandoned to the blind influence of

of inſtinct or paſſion, it is too evident to need demonſtration, that this would iſſue in a conduct as pernicious to himſelf, as detrimental to ſociety. To prevent this fatal effect, man is endued with reaſon and reflection, whereby he can recogniſe his temper and affections, and weigh the conſequences of his actions: He is hereby enabled to ſubdue or regulate the ſelf-affections, by eſtimating the real value of their objects, and thereby leſſening their influence. Thus he may remedy the diſorder of paſſions, eſtabliſh an agreeable tranquillity in his own mind; and at the ſame time, add ſtrength and vigour to the virtuous affections, by attending to their intrinſick excellence, and ſurveying all thoſe happy effects which they naturally produce; and by this means he may conſtantly carry on the improvements of virtue; and, from his increaſing knowledge of the general conſtitution, be more and more ſatisfied, that it is the great end of his nature; and therefore, that its obligation muſt be compleat.

LET us here pauſe a moment, to conſider this part of our conſtitution, whereby we are rendered capable of a continued progreſſive improvement.

MAN has evidently planted in his mind, the ſeeds and firſt principles of wiſdom, and virtue; but it is equally manifeſt, that, if theſe ſhall lie

altogether uncultivated, they will contribute very little to raiſe him to that degree of happineſs, perfection and dignity, of which Nature has certainly made him capable. In a mind entirely neglected, theſe excellent ſeeds will hardly ſpring up, and their influence muſt be ſtifled by the prevalence, of ſenſual pleaſures, and purſuits. In this caſe, man will be little diſtinguiſhed from the other animals, and the objects of their purſuit will be much the ſame. Nay, perhaps man will not have ſuch a ſincere reliſh of animal pleaſures, as theſe have. That nobler principle with which he is endowed, however oppreſſed, may yet give him ſome ſecret diſcontent, or his natural deſires of greater degrees of happineſs, may ſenſibly daſh all his preſent enjoyments.

If we then conſider man, in a merely natural ſtate, without the advantages of culture and improvement, he muſt make a very inconſiderable figure, and hardly claim any great ſuperiority over the other animals. Nay, it will be well, if he does not render himſelf ſtill more baſe than theſe, by degenerating into unnatural vices.

On the other hand, when we conſider the perfection to which the human nature may be carried, by a juſt education, by a proper culture, and vigorous induſtry, our ideas of it muſt be wonderfully enlarged.

IT is in this manner, that man makes a continual progreſs in wiſdom and knowledge, and carries on the improvement of the arts, and ſciences, to an unlimited extent. By the ſame means, he enlarges and ſtrengthens the habits of virtue, and promotes that temper of mind and purpoſe of heart, which moſt effectually ſecure his own peace, and the happineſs of all with whom he has any intercourſe.

HEREBY it is, that a Socrates is diſtinguiſhed from the barbarous Indian, whoſe mind may naturally be capable of an equal degree of perfection in wiſdom and virtue: It is by means of this progreſſive improvement, that man may riſe in the ſcale of being, and of happineſs, to ſuch a height as his preſent conceptions cannot well reach. But as in every purſuit, it is the proſpect of advantage that excites action, and animates induſtry; ſo our improvements in virtue muſt chiefly depend upon its ſuppoſed tendency to advance our happineſs: and therefore all the reflections which we make upon the whole analogy of things, muſt unite in the confirmation of this neceſſary, and important principle. For it would be impoſſible to carry the moral ſyſtem to its juſt perfection, unleſs we ſhould ſuppoſe the whole frame and order of things, to be ſuch, as always to favour our advances in virtue, and to diſcourage our relapſe into vice.

If ever our reflections ſhould carry us to any remarkable point of the conſtitution, from whence virtue ſhould appear deſtitute of every character of excellence to diſtinguiſh it from vice, for example, if we ſhould ſuppoſe them quite indifferent in the eſtimation of the Deity, all improvement would here ſtop, ſince there could be no proper motive to forward it. Nay, what is worſe, the difference betwixt virtue and vice, muſt appear founded rather in imagination, than the truth of things; which muſt ever be conformable to the ideas in the divine mind. This reflexion muſt ſenſibly cool our ardour in the purſuit of virtue, give a new turn to our thoughts, and diſpoſe us to prefer vice whenever it falls in with our preſent taſte and inclination. How pernicious ſuch a theory muſt be to the cauſe of virtue and the intereſt of mankind, is too clear, and ſtriking, to need any illuſtration.

But to reſume the thread of our argument, we ſhall now conſider what ſtrength and advantage the moral ſenſe receives from the proper exerciſe of our reflecting faculty. It is not, however, our deſign, nicely to analize the moral ſenſe, and to examine its various modifications, but only to make ſuch general obſervations, as may appear moſt material for our preſent purpoſe.

THE moral ſenſe, then, as has been obſerved, repreſents a certain temper and conduct, as beautiful and agreeable; but there are often other paſſions, which, by too much recommending their favourite objects, determine us to the purſuit of theſe. However, when the gratification of paſſion is over, and we are diſpoſed calmly to reflect upon our conduct, we plainly diſapprove of it; we now wiſh we had acted otherwiſe, and complied with the ſuggeſtion of the moral ſenſe. From ſuch reflexion, the moral ſenſe muſt, no doubt, receive conſiderable ſtrength; becauſe this ſelf-diſapprobation, tho' ſuppoſed even weak, yet, as it is conſtant, and ſtill breaks in upon our calm thoughts, it muſt therefore merit the greater regard. For whilſt this remains with us, we can never poſſeſs a full tranquillity of mind; whereas, on the other hand, a victory over a bad paſſion, tho' the ſtruggle may, in the mean time, be painful, yet afterwards it affords us a pleaſing reflection.

THE moral ſenſe firſt recommends virtue, or a virtuous action, to our practice and purſuit, from that peculiar beauty with which it diſcovers it to be arrayed; and this is no doubt a very proper motive to influence the mind. But then, as in other caſes, we may often reaſonably reſiſt the influence of a merely beautiful ſpecies;

ſo it does not appear, that virtue, conſidered ſimply under the character of beautiful, produces the force of an obligation: It is therefore another modification of the moral ſenſe, that lays the foundation of this laſt ſentiment. And, in fact, with regard to many actions at leaſt, we feel a ſenſe of duty pointing them out to us, as what we ought to perform; and, when we act contrary to this ſenſe, we ſuffer pain and remorſe upon reflexion; whereas, when we comply with it, we enjoy a pleaſing conſciouſneſs and inward ſatisfaction of mind.

THAT this really is the caſe, cannot be called in queſtion; it is what we have an intimate feeling of, and there is no phenomenon of the human mind, that has been more univerſally acknowledged, than the ſharp remorſe, and painful apprehenſions of a guilty conſcience.

As this principle of conſcience has a remarkable influence upon practice, and is conſidered by the judicious and acute Dr Butler as the great ſpring of morality, it will merit ſome particular attention.

CONSCIENCE plainly implies, ſome judgment or opinion we form of our actions as right or wrong; and in this view it alſo rewards the firſt with inward tranquillity and ſatisfaction of mind; whereas, it puniſhes the other with bitter remorſe and fearful apprehenſions. It places a

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ſtrong guard upon the mind, to prevent injury or wrong to be done to others, and leaves us at leſs liberty with regard to their intereſts, than even our own. Thus we can eaſily digeſt an inconſiderable damage which we may bring upon ourſelves; but if we do an action, which occaſions a like damage to another, we feel a remorſe much greater than any pain we ſuffered for our own loſs in the former caſe, and in others is excited, not ſo much a ſympathy with the ſufferer, as an indignation at the perſon who has done him the wrong.

In conſequence of this, we may further obſerve with regard to conſcience, that it often ſtands in an immediate oppoſition to ſelf-love. Some principles, indeed, we may be naturally inclined to cultivate and promote; but no man would willingly plant in his own breaſt, a witneſs and cenſor, that reproaches him ſo bitterly, and an executioner that puniſhes him ſo ſeverely. We muſt here acknowledged the hand of the ſupreme Creator himſelf, who has planted in our breaſt, for purpoſes no leſs excellent than they are conſpicuous, a principle, which ſelf-love, the ſtrongeſt principle in our nature, would extinguiſh or eradicate, if it could.

The aſſemblage of two ſuch principles, as conſcience and ſelf-love, (often at ſuch variance with one another) in the ſame ſubject, muſt appear

pear wonderful. But we will ſtill more admire the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Creator, if we reflect, that the compleat happineſs of man, as a ſocial creature, depends upon the perfect reconciliation and friendſhip of theſe two principles; for, in this caſe, the good of others will be the ſource of our trueſt pleaſure, and all the induſtry of every member of ſociety will be employed, even for his own ſake, to promote the good of the ſpecies; and this muſt produce that order in ſociety, than which none more perfect can be conceived. And to attain this noble effect, is the manifeſt deſign of conſcience.

For this principle is the immediate avenger of wrong, and its puniſhments are as unavoidable, as they are ſevere. A criminal may conceal his crimes from a human judge, or may eſcape out of his reach; but no darkneſs, or change of place, can ſecure us from the inſpection and reproaches of conſcience.

Wherever we go, we carry about with us this ſecret, but ſevere monitor; and in the involuntary pains to which we muſt ſubmit, we are led to acknowledge the awful vicegerent of avenging heaven.

But, on the other hand, a conſciouſneſs of innocence and integrity, is a ſource of inward tranquillity, and agreeable hope; and that ſecret

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peace and conſtant ſatisfaction which ſtill attends an upright conduct, is of much greater importance to our happineſs, than all the tranſitory pleaſures of ſenſe.

FROM the foregoing obſervations upon natural conſcience, the influence of that principle upon ſocial virtue, muſt appear to be very conſiderable.

HOWEVER, if we confine our idea of conſcience to that of a mere ſentiment, or immediate inſtinct, it never can prove a ſource of that conſtant, uniform and regular conduct, which virtue neceſſarily implies. This will appear evident, from a very few reflexions upon that principle.

For, in the firſt place, it will be allowed, that tho' conſcience is a common principle in all, yet ſome men have a greater delicacy, and quicker ſenſe in their moral feelings than others; on which account, the influence of conſcience muſt be proportionally unequal in different perſons. But further, ſome men, from bad impreſſions in youth, or even from a continued courſe of wickedneſs, may, in a great meaſure, overcome the natural checks of conſcience; this principle may be for a long time ſilenced, or its admonitions little attended to, amidſt the noiſe and buſtle of criminal purſuits; and eſpecially, whilſt men perceive, that none of thoſe evils

evils come upon them, which their guilty fears are apt to ſuggeſt, they may begin to think, that conſcience is but a deluſion, an empty phantom, that would frighten them with imaginary dangers; and in this manner, that principle, may loſe a great deal of its natural authority.

LAST of all, when conſcience is conſidered only as a mere ſentiment lodged within a man's own breaſt, and having no reference to any thing elſe that may give it ſtrength and ſupport, its influence muſt receive the greateſt diminution from this reflexion; for, in this view, its authority will hardly be recogniſed by the imperious Will, which undoubtedly will endeavour to ſubdue its influence, in the ſame manner as it does with regard to other paſſions and principles of our nature.

FROM theſe reflexions upon the authority of conſcience, this principle, however conſiderable in itſelf, yet cannot be thought a ſufficient ſupport to virtue, ſo as to give it an equal, uniform, and effectual obligation. It plainly leaves the bad at more liberty than the good, and its influence muſt be often very irregular, and uncertain.

INDEED, it muſt be allowed in general, that the mere inſtinctive principles of our nature, are not in themſelves ſufficient to conſtitute, or eſta-

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bliſh what can truly or properly be called virtue. Virtue is a quality belonging to man, only as a reaſonable being, and we never aſcribe it to the inferior animals, altho' their inſtincts and affections are often more regular, and juſt, than thoſe of the human ſpecies

REASON is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtick of man; it is this faculty which places his conduct and character in that point of light, in which virtue can alone be diſcovered. For virtue does not conſiſt in particular acts; it denotes a regular and uniform conduct, which can be obſerved and acknowledged, by the intellectual faculty alone.

SELF-LOVE, or a deſire of happineſs, is the great principle in individuals; the juſt and proper motives of virtue, muſt therefore entirely depend upon the nature of the general ſyſtem. If that ſyſtem is ſuch as to correſpond with the moral ſentiments, and alſo to render virtue upon the whole, our trueſt intereſt, we ſhall then be able to diſcover a ſolid foundation for this quality, in the real nature of things. But if the ſyſtem is otherwiſe, or we ſuppoſe no ſyſtem at all, it will be very much in vain to ſearch after any real principle of virtue. It is evidently the province of reaſon, to determine this important point, and the truth of the foregoing propoſitions

tions will be eſtabliſhed by a very few obvious reflexions.

For if we ſhall ſuppoſe this univerſe, and all that it contains, to be the random effect of a fortuitous concourſe of atoms, there can, in this caſe, be no uniting principle, or governing cauſe; our connections therefore with other beings, muſt be precarious, tranſient, and weak; in this view, we cannot reaſonably conſider ourſelves as parts of a ſyſtem, ſince, in reality, there can be no ſyſtem at all.

Upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, it is vain to inquire after order; the apparent connections, relations, and dependencies of things, muſt be fallacious, ſince their is no unity of deſign to connect them, no end to which they can refer, nor centre in which they can terminate.

A world thus fluctuating at random, without an intelligent ruler, without a common and beneficent parent, preſents but an uncomfortable proſpect, and ſhoots a gloom through the human heart. We cannot now conſider ourſelves as members of an auguſt community; and all the kind charities, the warm and elevated ſentiments, which would thence naturally ariſe, are utterly extinguiſhed.

Such a view damps the noble energies of the ſoul, and all its cares about ſuch a tranſitory and fortuitous

fortuitous life, or any thing that concerns it, muſt be rendered uſeleſs and vain. For life itſelf (as the Emperor Antoninus juſtly obſerved, without God, and Providence, is not worth the poſſeſſing. Thus are the foundations of exalted ſentiment, refind affection, and ſolid truth, overturned; and conſequently virtue is not eaſy to be diſtinguiſhed, nor much worth the ſeeking after.

It is therefore not to be wondered at, that thoſe who can allow themſelves to enter into this way of thinking, are at a loſs to diſcover, or perhaps think it little worth their while, to inquire after virtue.

Such perſons have no rational principle to unite them to a common ſyſtem, and can have no view of happineſs beyond the preſent; they muſt therefore bring down their ſtandard of good to the object of ſome preſent taſte, or paſſion; and that different, according to the particular temper, and inclination of each individual. Hence that great variety of opinions concerning the ſupreme good.

And this is alſo the genuine ſource of thoſe miſeries, and diſorders that diſtreſs human ſociety. For when men confine their views of ultimate happineſs, to ſuch particular goods as will not eaſily admit of diviſion, or participation, this

muſt lay a ſure foundation of endleſs quarrels and animoſities.

But let us now reverſe the proſpect, and conſider this univerſe as a regular ſyſtem, under the government of a wiſe and intelligent Cauſe. Here, a delightful ſcene opens to our view, which inſpires the mind with equal ſentiments of grandeur and beauty. We find all things united into an excellent ſyſtem, by the moſt wonderful and uninterrupted harmony.

This view of things raiſes the dignity of our nature, repreſents us in the endearing regards of members of the ſame family, and makes us conſider God as our common parent, the great author of all our bleſſedneſs. Hence we diſcover the true foundation of beauty eſtabliſhed in the nature and order of things, which correſponds to our moral ſenſe, and gives it at once the greateſt improvement, and moſt exquiſite delight.

We may alſo hereby correct any irregularities or diſorders in the moral ſenſe, and adjuſt it to the true ſtandard of nature.

This moral beauty will not ſimply prove an object of agreeable contemplation; it muſt take hold of the affections, raiſe them above low purſuits, and engage them with vigour and activity in the practice of virtue.

I CANNOT here avoid tranſcribing a paſſage from Cicero, in his firſt book *de legibus*, where, with his uſual eloquence and juſtneſs of thought, he illuſtrates this argument from the very ſame topic.

HE repreſents this world as a great ſyſtem, wherein all mankind are united by a common nature and intereſt; that this communion comprehends the almighty God, as the ſupreme ruler and governor of all. And afterwards, he expreſſes himſelf in the following manner, "He "who knows himſelf, will, in the firſt place, "be ſenſible, that he has a divine principle in "his ſoul. He will conſider his intellectual fa-"culty, as an image of the Deity, conſecrated "within his own breaſt; and will ever think and "act in a manner worthy of ſo great a gift of "the gods. And when he has taken an exact "ſurvey of his own conſtitution, he will obſerve "how richly nature has provided him with fa-"culties, means and opportunities of acquiring "wiſdom. For he will diſcover in himſelf the "obſcure principles of univerſal knowledge, by "the due improvement of which, he may be-"come virtuous, and conſequently be happy. "For, when the mind, from a juſt perception "of the excellence of virtue, deſpiſes corpo-"real pleaſures, and avoids them as its greateſt "reproach, ſubdues the fleſhly appetites, and

" riſes above the fear of pain and death; when " under the direction of prudence, it acts ſui- " tably to the common tye, which binds all " mankind, adopts pure ſentiments of religion, " and maintains the worſhip of the gods; is it " poſſible to form an idea of a character more " excellent and bleſſed than this? Such a man, " when he conſiders this mighty univerſe, what " is mortal and periſhing in it, and what is di- " vine and eternal; when he has, as it were, an " immediate feeling of that ſupreme Being who " governs and diſpoſes of all things; and when " he looks upon himſelf, not as an inhabitant, " confined within the walls of a ſingle town, " but as a deniſon of the univerſe, as of one great " city: in ſuch an enlarged and magnificent " view of things, what a ſenſe, ye immortal " gods, muſt he have of the dignity of his na- " ture? How will he undervalue and deſpiſe, " and conſider as empty trifles, thoſe things " which men are apt to ſet the higheſt value " upon?

Theſe ſentiments prove themſelves to be equally natural and noble. And we ſhall only conſider a little further, what is the part we have to act in compliance and conformity with the ſyſtem here repreſented.

THE exercise of the social affections afford a great part of the truest happiness in life. Without society all the particular pleasures of sense would prove insipid; and a man possessed of them all, if exposed on a desart island, and quite cut off from human commerce, would find his condition, but extremely uncomfortable. Benevolence is that agreeable bond which unites mankind, and the reciprocal pleasures of loving and being beloved, constitute the firm foundation of these purer joys which flow from our social intercourses.

IF we consider man, then, as a social creature, the most perfect idea we can form of the human system is, when we suppose the good of the whole, and the good of each individual to coincide; or, in other words, when the exercise of the public affections, such as lead to the good of the system, affords us a greater pleasure, than the indulgence of any particular passions. And till human nature is brought to this degree of perfection, it is evident that our happiness cannot be compleat. This, in reality, is far from being the condition of our present state. We feel, in experience, the too great violence of particular passions. Inferior objects have such an influence upon us, that we are obliged to divide the empire of our breasts, betwixt the private and public affections; and the

former are often too fatally prevalent and ſucceſsful.

THIS being the caſe, if we ſuppoſe, with the Epicureans, that the ſoul is mortal and that death puts an end to us at once, ſuch an opinion muſt throw human nature into a deep ſhade, and render all the cares about it of very little conſequence. It muſt naturally reduce our Temper into a ſettled ſelfiſhneſs, as our notion of happineſs muſt ſink down to preſent gratification, and our generous concerns and painful toils for the good of others, muſt appear but as a piece of fruitleſs knight-errantry. The object of virtue, upon this ſcheme, in a manner loſes all its worth and excellence, and ſo does its reward too, and that in every reſpect.

BUT when we reflect upon the beautiful ſcheme we have been conſidering above, human nature aſſumes a more amiable and engaging form; the moral excellence opens upon the mind with a brighter luſtre, and gives a finer turn to the paſſions. Our mutual connections appear ſtrong and durable, and, whilſt we view the pleaſing extent of human ſociety, our affections dilate themſelves in an agreeable and vigorous manner, and animate us in the execution of every generous deſign. And, whilſt the ſocial affections thus acquire greater force and vigour; the ſelfiſh ones, on the other hand, muſt ſuffer a proportional decay. Self government is hereby rendered

dered more eaſy and agreeable, and we have a juſter and more exalted reliſh of the pleaſures of virtue.

ALTHOUGH what has been already ſaid, may appear to be of conſiderable weight to eſtabliſh the foundations and carry on the improvement of virtue; yet it does not ſeem ſufficient to perfect its obligation. For whatever foundation of moral beauty there may be in the nature of man and the conſtitution of things, yet the Perception of this beauty depends upon the faculties and taſte of each particular perſon. Some men are capable of carrying their reflections upon this ſubject much farther than others, and of taking both a juſter, and more extenſive view of moral objects. There is a difference too, in point of taſte and ſentiment, and all are not equally affected with the beauty of a moral ſpecies. Now, if we ſhould reſt the obligation of virtue, ſolely upon the foundation of moral beauty, it is plain, it would be very unequal, and felt very differently by different perſons. But the obligation to virtue muſt be equal with regard to every man, otherwiſe the perfect happineſs of ſociety could not be attained. For if men were no otherwiſe bound to the practice of virtue, but as they were influenced by their particular taſte, this would abſolutely contradict that idea of juſtice, which, as we ſhall afterwards endeavour

vour to ſhew, is neceſſary and eſſential to the happineſs of ſociety.

But there is another conſideration, which renders the obligation to virtue, in our preſent view of it, ſtill imperfect. For, notwithſtanding the ſuperior pleaſures of virtue as are already remarked, it muſt be owned, that in many occurrences in life, the practice of it may ſo interfere with other paſſions, nay, be attended with ſuch difficulties, and expoſe us to ſo great dangers, that the mere influence of moral taſte, may be far from being ſufficient to ſupport us againſt ſuch diſcouragements.

It will therefore be neceſſary, in order to render the obligation to virtue equal and perfect, to trace the ſyſtem ſtill higher, and carry our views to the great Author of it, upon whom it muſt entirely depend.

It is taken for granted, that virtue leads to the general good; and, for that very reaſon, it muſt be agreeable to the Deity. This neceſſarily flows from the idea we form of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs. In conſequence of theſe perfections of the Deity, he muſt approve of that conduct upon our part, which immediately tends to promote ſo valuable an end. For it is an abſurdity, and even a contradiction to ſuppoſe God to be concerned for the end, and yet indifferent as to the means.

COULD we ſuppoſe, that God was quite indifferent as to our moral conduct, and conſequently as to that good to which it naturally leads, this would entirely deſtroy our idea of Providence, and annihilate the difference betwixt virtue and vice. For human reaſon could never pretend to eſtabliſh a difference, where it was ſenſible the divine wiſdom ſaw there was none at all.

IT muſt therefore be true, that God approves of virtue, and diſapproves of vice; and it muſt be equally certain, that virtue is our duty, our wiſdom and happineſs, and vice the contrary. To us then it muſt appear of the utmoſt conſequence, whether God approves of our conduct or not; for, in whatever object or good our ſupreme happineſs may be ſuppoſed to be placed, God muſt be conſidered as the original author of it. Thus is the divine authority plainly interpoſed in behalf of virtue; an authority, ſo much the more reſpectable, as it is founded on eſſential wiſdom and goodneſs. Nay, this goodneſs is not ſimply directed to the perfection of the ſyſtem, but may include our particular happineſs. This, we may readily believe from the effects of authority, in many inſtances which we experience.

WE are often engaged in a courſe of behaviour not from the apparent utility or agreeableneſs of ſuch a courſe, but by the mere authority of a parent,

parent, or ſome guardian who has the charge of our conduct; yet when habit has reconciled us to it, we thank our Superiors, whoſe authority has engaged us to that, which, though preſent taſte and inclination would not have recommended, yet afterwards, upon reflection, we greatly approve of as beſt.

When we reflect upon what is here ſaid, we may be able to underſtand the meaning of natural conſcience, and explain the force of the reflex approbation or diſapprobation of our own conduct. The authority of conſcience is juſtly eſteemed a ſtrong principle of morality. But if we conſider man as an independent being, it will be hard to conceive, that any principle in the human mind, ſhould claim an authority over the mind itſelf, and bring it under the force of an obligation.

In this caſe, the more we reflect, we will be the more apt to ſubject conſcience, as well as any other principle or paſſion, to the ſovereignty of the will.

But when we attend to the idea of the divine authority, we find an evident counterpart to natural conſcience, ſomething which explains its meaning, and ſecures to it an indiſputable authority over our conduct.

This reflection is even applicable to all the different modifications of the moral ſenſe. That ſenſe, when calmly conſulted, commonly points out

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our duty with abundance of clearneſs; yet oppoſite paſſions and unexpected difficulties, are apt to defeat its influence, and fruſtrate its tendency.

But, when we bring to its aid, a ſenſe of the divine authority, this is ſufficient to remove all theſe obſtacles, and give it its natural and juſt effect. For, though the immediate ſatisfaction of doing well, is not always a ſufficient ſupport to duty, yet the perſuaſion of this being our true intereſt upon the whole, muſt ever be conſidered as ſuch.

It may perhaps be objected, that it would appear injurious to the native excellence and dignity of virtue, to refer it as a means to ſome further end, and to ſupport it, by the proſpect of ſome greater diſtant good. But it is to be obſerved, that it no ways derogates from the immediate goodneſs of virtue, to conſider it as a mean, as well as an end; for a mean, even of itſelf indifferent, perhaps diſagreeable, has yet a certain beauty reflected upon it, from a good end to which it leads. Thus, in purſuit of ſome diſtant good, we chearfully paſs through toils and dangers, which otherwiſe would prove very diſagreeable. Virtue then, though conſidered as a mean of ſtill greater good, will loſe none of its immediate ſatisfactions; nay, it muſt improve them, by the addition of thoſe, which are reflected upon it, from the further goodneſs of the end,

end, to which, by the wiſeſt conſtitution, it unerringly leads; and that this is really the caſe of virtue, and that hereby it acquires its full ſtrength, and ſecurity, in the preſent ſtate and condition of things, muſt clearly appear from what has been ſaid.

THUS have we endeavoured ſhortly to point out the nature, and delineate the obligation of morality, not from metaphyſical ſubtilties, but from thoſe principles which actually take place in the human conſtitution. Principles, which have, though an imperfect, yet a ſenſible, and even a general influence, where human nature is not entirely debauched: An influence, in the nature of the thing, capable of being carried to the higheſt improvement; and to the prevalence, and improvement of which principles, the happineſs of mankind, even in this world, will ever bear an invariable proportion.

As from what has been ſaid, the reaſon and obligation of Morality, muſt appear in the ſtrongeſt light; ſo its moſt eſſential branches will be no leſs conſpicuous.

Every individual perſon is a little ſyſtem within himſelf; and we are all parts of a greater ſyſtem.

THE perfection then of the general ſyſtem, muſt depend upon the perfection, and order of the parts ſeparately conſidered, and upon their

their fitneſs and tendency to promote the general good. In conſequence of this, every man muſt maintain order within himſelf, and preſerve the due balance of the affections. This ſelf-government is neceſſary to our immediate happineſs; to the peace, compoſure, and conſtancy of our own minds. It is alſo neceſſary to put us in a proper frame, and a right poſture to purſue with advantage the ſecond and more important branch of our duty, which conſiſts in the practice of every virtue, which tends to communicate happineſs to others, and to preſerve the order, and promote the good of the whole.

And for this noble purpoſe, the Deity hath planted in our natures, ſocial and kind affections; the due improvement of which, upon proper and extenſive principles, muſt unite the private and public intereſt, and render the firſt ſubſervient to the laſt; and thus, unleſs we be willfully blind, we can never miſtake the great lines of duty.

We muſt be convinced, that due ſelf-government includes ſelf denial, temperance, meekneſs, patience, equanimity, and ſuch virtues as immediately relate to the order and rectitude of our own minds; and we muſt be equally ſatisfied, that juſtice, truth, goodneſs, fortitude and care, are eſſentially neceſſary to maintain the order, and promote the good of the public.

THE reaſon for the practice of virtue ariſes primarily from the ſatisfaction and home-felt delight, which the conſciouſneſs of it immediately imports; and this delight increaſes in proportion, as our affections are refined and enlarged by more extenſive views of the beauty and goodneſs of the ſyſtem.

BUT the moſt compleat counter-balance to the ſelf-affections, the ſtrongeſt motive to virtue, and what renders its obligation perfect and entire, is the divine authority, founded upon eſſential wiſdom and goodneſs, interpoſed in its behalf.

THIS conſideration muſt eſtabliſh the moſt eſſential difference betwixt virtue and vice; and impreſs the mind of man with the ſtrongeſt and moſt invariable ſenſe of this difference.

GOD is the centre in which the ſyſtem terminates, the author of its excellent conſtitution, and the guardian of its wiſe laws; and a juſt ſenſe of this is ſufficient to fix and invigorate the fluctuating and feeble ſentiments, to collect the diſſipated affections, and happily unite all, in proſecution of the ſame beautiful and great deſign.

BUT, as we have thus endeavoured to ſtrengthen and ſecure Morality, from a religious principle, it may be objected, firſt, that we have

have taken for granted, what ought to have been proved; and next, that it is contrary to experience; for, that there may be, and in fact that there have been eminent improvements in virtue, without any regard to religion.

As this is a matter of great importance in Morality, it may merit a particular examination.

With regard to the firſt objection, it is to be obſerved, that, in reaſoning concerning Morality, we muſt either have an expreſs or tacit reference to one ſcheme or another; we muſt either adopt a religious ſyſtem, or an atheiſtical one; that is, none at all.

MORALITY relates to a regular courſe of life, directed to a certain end, kept ſteadily in view. Now this muſt make it neceſſary for us, to know ſomething of the nature of thoſe things, on which our happineſs depends; to form ſome opinion, concerning the original extent and end of our exiſtence, and of the connections we have with other beings.

IT is in this manner only, that we can aſcertain ſome ultimate end, to which our actions may be referred, and without which it would be vain to dream of a regular conduct; we muſt therefore, at leaſt tacitely, adopt one of the above contrary hypotheſes; and in ſuch a competition

every phænomenon in nature, will allow us to give the preference to religion.

But let us for a moment ſuppoſe it doubtful, which of the two hypotheſes is the trueſt; as we muſt chuſe one of them, it would be wiſe to prefer that of religion, for reaſons too obvious to be mentioned; and it is not in the power, nor indeed in the nature of ſcepticiſm, (which implies an univerſal doubting) to carry the notion of Athieſm beyond that of a doubt.

If I may mention an authority here, I ſhall quote the words of a celebrated writer, remarkable for his freedom of thought, I mean Lord Shaftſbury. That noble Author, in his rhapſody, ſpeaking of Athieſm, ſays, "He, who doubts, "may poſſibly lament his own unhappineſs, and "wiſh to be convinced; he who denies, is daring-"ly preſumptuous, and ſets up an opinion, a-"gainſt the intereſt of mankind, and being of "ſociety; it is eaſily ſeen, that one of thoſe "perſons may bear a due reſpect to the magi-"ſtrate, and laws; tho' not the other, who "being obnoxious to them, is therefore puniſh-"able."

But even the ſubject we have been treating, naturally ſuggeſts a ſtrong proof of the reality of religion. For here is a certain fact, a remarkable phænomenon, not to be accounted for without it. The fact is, a general ſenſe in the minds of mankind,

mankind, of an eſſential difference betwixt virtue and vice; and that the former ſubjects private to public good.

Now, we have ſhown that this difference, cannot be juſtly ſupported without religion, which alone perfectly unites public and private intereſt: therefore, as there is ſuch a neceſſary connection betwixt them, when we allow the one, we muſt alſo admit the other.

To proceed now to the other objection, That, in fact, there have been eminent degrees of virtue, where there has been no principle of religion at all.

It will indeed be admitted, that there may be a moral ſenſe of right and wrong, a natural love of order, and juſtice, and kind and benevolent affections, without any principle of religion. Theſe principles, good in themſelves, may likeways have a conſiderable influence upon a virtuous conduct. But then, in conſequence of what has been already ſaid, they are but as the lineaments of virtue drawn upon the mind, and need the aid and intervention of religion, to improve them to a juſt degree of perfection. This, we have already ſhown, from reaſonings *a priori*, and theſe reaſonings are likeways confirmed from fact and experience.

SOME few men are happy in their natural temper, are placed in eaſy and commodious circumſtances, and exempted from the principal temptations to which others are expoſed: theſe men, by means of the natural principles above mentioned, may, in a good meaſure, preſerve their innocence, and even diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſuch private virtues, as fall in with their taſte and are ſuited to their particular affections.

THIS has been the caſe with ſome very few of the Epicureans; but, at the ſame time, they ever excuſed themſelves from the practice of thoſe more important virtues, which were attended with labour, danger, and difficulty; and which croſſed and diſappointed thoſe favourite enjoyments, which moſt ſuited the particular temper, and turn of their minds. Thus their virtue was confined to a very private ſphere; and even that, a variable one, if we ſuppoſe their taſte might change.

BUT whatever virtue we may expect from ſuch men as we have been now talking of, the caſe is very different with regard to the great bulk of mankind, even ſuch as are in a ſuperior rank. The paſſions of men are often ſtrong and impetuous, and their various circumſtances in life, expoſe them to many violent temptations; and tho' they may be poſſeſſed of the natural principles

principles of virtue, in as high a degree as thoſe above mentioned; yet theſe, if altogether unaſſiſted, and reſting ſingly upon their natural ſtrength, will prove too weak a counter-balance, and eaſily give way to the ſuperior force of the antagoniſt paſſions and temptations.

THESE virtuous principles, muſt therefore be ſupported, by the helps and improvements of reaſon and reflection; and what theſe helps are, morality is the ſcience that informs us.

Now morality, as a general ſcience, muſt not be founded upon the caſe and circumſtances of a few individuals, but muſt avail itſelf of ſuch principles as are common to mankind, and affect human nature in general; ſuch as may be ſufficient to govern our ſentiments and affections, and happily direct and unite them in the purſuit of one great end.

THE principles of religion we have ſhown to be ſuch: but, if we ſet aſide religion, we ſhall never be able to eſtabliſh a common intereſt, one great end, ſufficient to engage our conſtant purſuit. In ſuch a caſe, the ſentiments of men, muſt be looſe and variable, and they can have nothing to govern them but their own fickle fancies.

A general intereſt will be neglected, whilſt each purſues the particulnr object of his taſte; and

and when ſeveral fix upon the ſame indiviſible object, as their chief good, they muſt unavoidably ſplit into factions.

In conſequence of this, a thouſand jarring intereſts muſt diſturb the peace, and infringe the order of ſociety. Diſcord, animoſity, and every evil paſſion muſt prevail, and fill the world with proportional diſtreſs.

Thus it appears, that vice, and miſery, are the natural effects of atheiſm: whereas religion, by reconciling the different intereſts of mankind, and repreſenting the ſyſtem to us in the nobleſt form, may influence our virtue, ſo as to give it vigour, and firmneſs, in its common operations, and inſpire it with new life, in difficult and arduous caſes, whereby it may be equal to the moſt heroic atchievements.

Thus it will appear, upon the ſtricteſt examination of things, that a religious principle, is the moſt firm and ſure ſupport of virtue.

What regard has, in fact, been paid to this principle by mankind, we may have occaſion hereafter more particularly to conſider.

It may ſuffice, in the mean time, to obſerve, that Philoſophers of all denominotions have, in effect

effect, given full teſtimony to this important truth.

It can hardly be doubted, but that the great reaſon why the Epicureans denied the providence of God, was, that they might thereby deliver themſelves from a ſubjection to his laws, and government. This appears from innumerable paſſages of Lucretius, and others, who have given an account of the philoſophy of that ſect.

Thoſe laws, they were never able to reconcile with their own paſſions and inclinations, but were forced to conſider them, as croſſing their ſelfiſh views, and obliging them to the practice of virtue, and purſuit of public happineſs.

Had it been in their power to have formed an idea of God, as of one like themſelves, who would either approve of, or at leaſt be indifferent about their particular paſſions and conduct, they would have been under no temptation to have denied a providence, the denial of which reduced them to the miſerable neceſſity of abſurdly accounting for all things from a fortuitous conconrſe of actions.

As for the Theiſtical philoſophers, tho' they do not always mention the religious principle, yet they frequently lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon it. We have already ſeen the ſenſe that Cicero had

had of this matter; and in his treatiſe *de amicitia*, he affirms, that men have acceſs to heaven, in proportion as they have been virtuous.

PLATO, the greateſt of the ancient moraliſts, is never ſatisfied with all he can ſay in ſupport of virtue, till he has ſet the religious principle, chiefly as it regards a future ſtate, in the ſtrongeſt point of light. This he does ſo copiouſly, almoſt upon every occaſion, that it would be ſuperfluous to quote any paſſages from him.

To conclude this argument, it were eaſy to ſhow, that, upon the ſuppoſition of atheiſm, philoſophy and reflexion would be ſo far from adding ſtrength to the primary principles of virtue, that, on the contrary, they would weaken and impair them.

WHEN a man does wrong, he has a painful feeling of the injuſtice, his conſcience makes him uneaſy, and alarms him with an apprehenſion of merited puniſhment.

THESE ſentiments, with little reflection, may prevent his doing ſuch an injury for the future. But if we ſhall, upon this atheiſtical ſcheme, deliberately examine the nature and force of ſuch ſentiments, we may ſoon reaſon them all away, or refine them into very ſlender and ineffectual ideas. We muſt diſcover the apprehenſion of merited puniſhment, to be chimerical, and the

ſenſe

ſenſe of wrong to be the mere offspring of our own minds; and therefore not of authority ſufficient to make us ſacrifice any favourite ſelfiſh paſſion to its ſuggeſtion.

THUS the more we think, the more we ſhall get above the influence of theſe natural ſentiments, and leave them only, or chiefly to operate upon the uninſtructed vulgar: and hereby it appears, how neceſſary it is to fortify and adorn virtue with all that ſtrength and dignity which religion imparts, whereby it will be able to bear the ſtricteſt review, and even gather ſtrength from the moſt accurate reflexion. And thus moral philoſophy becomes a ſcience, the moſt important and beneficial to mankind; but, which had much better be altogether preſcribed and baniſhed from ſociety, than ſuffered to raiſe virtue upon ſuch principles, as muſt ſink under its weight, and lay it in ruins.

WE ſhall now make a very few general reflexions upon that idea of ſocial virtue, which ariſes from the ſcheme we have ſhortly exhibited, and from which its peculiar beauty and excellence may clearly appear.

ITS object is the good of others, with this qualification, that a more general and extenſive good, is ſtill to be preferred to that, which is more partial and confined.

THUS

THIS good is purſued intentionally; that is, it is the deliberate aim and deſign of the mind to produce it; and, for this purpoſe, it employs its intelligent faculty, to diſcover wherein it conſiſts, and by what means it is to be accompliſhed. It is indeed very poſſible, that the judgment may ſometimes err; but where the intention of good is ſtrong and ſincere, ſuch miſtakes will at once be leſs frequent and dangerous; and where error is invincible, they will be conſidered rather as human frailty, than vices.

THUS is virtue, a living, active intelligent, and deſigning principle and ſource of good; and, by theſe characters, it will be eminently diſtinguiſhed from other qualities or things, however good or uſeful they may be, in their particular order.

SOME philoſophers have placed virtue, merely in right affection; and others have limited it to the particular affection of benevolence. But however uſeful the affections may be in the exerciſe of virtue, we muſt trace that principle a great deal higher, and can only diſcover it in the ſuperior powers of the mind.

THE affections themſelves muſt be regulated by theſe powers, otherwiſe, even the beſt of them would degenerate into vice.

THUS

THUS benevolence, perhaps the moſt amiable diſpoſition of the human heart, if not under the due government and direction of reaſon, often proves a ſource of the greateſt ills. It becomes an effeminacy in common life, tending to the ſubverſion of every manly principle. With regard to œconomical virtue, it is often a weakneſs in parents, than which nothing can be more fatal to the manners and characters of their children. In a magiſtrate, it is a timidity and imprudence, which diſappoints juſtice, and tends to the diſſolution of all order and government. And we might, in the ſame manner, trace the bad conſequences of an ungoverned benevolence thro' all the different characters of life.

VIRTUE is then the paramount principle which regulates the ſeveral affections, and gives them their proper influence and direction: It is therefore ſuperior to theſe in the order of nature, and the true ſource from whence they derive their greateſt excellence.

THIS is what Lord Shaftſbury is obliged to allow, after all the arguments he has made uſe of to prove, that virtue conſiſts merely in right affection.

In his rhapſody, p. 293. after commending a good natural temper, and generous diſpoſitions,

he adds, But who is there endeavours to give theſe to himſelf, or to advance his portion of happineſs in this kind? who thinks of improving, or ſo much as of preſerving his ſhare in a world, where, of neceſſity, it muſt run ſo great a hazard, and where we know an honeſt nature is ſo eaſily corrupted? He is ſtill more explicit, p. 405. ſpeaking of internal beauty, he there obſerves, That that which means and intends for it, regulates and orders it, is the principle of beauty; and that the beautifying, not the beautified, is the truly beautiful.

THUS virtue has its ſeat in the higher powers of the ſoul, and takes the direction of all the inſtinctive principles of our nature, from which it often meets with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition.

VIRTUE has ever been repreſented as the empire of the mind over the paſſions and affections, giving laws, and a particular direction to them. It has been diſtinguiſhed as an active principle, puſhing its way thro' dangers and difficulties, whilſt the proſpect of a ſuitable reward renders the toil lovely and agreeable.

The gods, ſays Heſiod, have placed ſweat, labour and difficulties acroſs our way to virtue; its path is ſtrait and ſteep, but it opens by degrees; and when we gain the ſummit, we reap joy and delight.

THIS

THIS ſentiment is invariably adopted and expreſſed in many beautiful allegories, by philoſophers in all ages. And what elſe can be the meaning of all the precepts of morality? They teach us how to govern our paſſions, to exert ourſelves vigorouſly in proſecution of what is right and good, at the expence of our moſt favourite enjoyments, and whatever pain and trouble it may coſt us in the mean time.

AND perhaps that beauty, that ſplendor and dignity of virtue, which is ſo much talked of, and ſo agreeably felt, ariſes, in a great meaſure, from viewing it in this light, as purſuing public good, preferably to private gratification; and this admirable part of the conſtitution, cannot be complied with, unleſs vigorous efforts are exerted againſt the immediate incitements of appetite and paſſion.

IT may be obſerved upon this occaſion, that the difficulties of virtue, cannot form an objection againſt the practice of it, eſpecially as theſe difficulties ariſe chiefly from the exceſs or diſorder of the paſſions and affections, and not from the nature of virtue itſelf.

INDEED, the mind needs the ſupport and aſſiſtance of ſuperior principles in the firm and conſtant proſecution of virtue. The principles however, which have been laid down, appear alone

to be of this ſort, and if properly improved, are ſufficient to animate us to encounter, and to enable us, in a good meaſure, to overcome the difficulties in our way; and they have this peculiar advantage, that they are calculated to influence, not only the more thinking and ſpeculative part of mankind, but even to ſtrike the vulgar, and break the force of their irregular paſſions; and if theſe are ſubdued, virtue and duty will be rendered eaſy and agreeable; they are ſo in themſelves, and only become otherwiſe, from the depravity of the human heart.

FROM theſe conſiderations therefore, it will clearly appear, that mankind in general, may make conſiderable progreſs in virtue.

THE principles which have been ſhortly explained, are beſt calculated to influence all the natural powers of the mind, and if difficulties ſhould ſtill remain, we can only overcome theſe by means of a divine aſſiſtance. We may therefore be encouraged to hope for ſuch aſſiſtance, if we make a proper improvement of the natural principles of virtue, and alſo to entertain the agreeable proſpect of arriving at a ſtate of greater perfection, in an after period of our being.

THUS have we marked, as it were the great lines of the nature, obligation, and principles of morality, without entering into any particular diſcuſſions

cuſſions. But it is hoped, (eſpecially, as afterwards there may be occaſion for further illuſtrations), that what is done may be ſufficient for the purpoſe we have chiefly in view; that is, to examine with more eaſe and perſpicuity, ſome of the moſt material matters contained in a late Book, publiſhed by Mr HUME, and intitled, *An Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.*

SECT II.

Of Juſtice.

THE Author whom we have juſt mentioned, diſcovers a ſtrength of genius, a fertility of invention, and an acuteneſs of reaſoning, indeed in an eminent degree. And in certain views which he has given us of morality, he ſeems to have applied theſe excellent talents with abundance of ſucceſs.

IT would have been extremely agreeable, could we have added with good reaſon, that he has preſerved a conſtancy in his opinions, and diſcovered that concern to clear up and diſtinguiſh truth, which he ſeems to have employed to perplex it, and thereby to confound all moral diſtinctions.

If this laſt inſinuation be juſt, it is at leaſt humane, to aſcribe ſuch conduct to the moſt innocent cauſes the nature of the thing will admit of.

It will, however, be neceſſary to uſe all that freedom, which a regard to the moſt important truth demands, in proſecution of our preſent deſign, which is to examine ſome of thoſe extraordinary doctrines regarding morality, which this Author has endeavoured to eſtabliſh.

What he ſays, for the moſt part, with abundance of clearneſs and preciſion, concerning benevolence, will need no review; but his peculiar notions concerning juſtice, may demand ſome attention.

It is not our deſign, to treat of juſtice in a formal ſyſtematic manner; but only to conſider what our author has advanced concerning the merit, and obligation of that virtue, and to make ſuch general obſervations, as may tend to detect the fallacy of his reaſoning, and demonſtrate in what reſpects he has miſtaken, and fallen ſhort of the truth.

In general, he aſſigns a ſenſe of publick utility or common intereſt, as the ſole origin of juſtice. This, at firſt ſight, has indeed a ſpecious appearance; but it might have needed ſome explication, which he has not yet thought fit to give.

A ſenſe of common intereſt, is a compound principle, including two things of a very different nature; the firſt is, a regard to our own intereſt; the other is, a regard to the intereſt of thoſe with whom we live in ſociety.

If theſe principles are juſtly united in ſuitable proportions, ſuch a happy compoſition will indeed prove a very natural and proper ſource of juſtice. But, if a regard to our own intereſt ſhall prevail, and gain the aſcendant over our conduct, this muſt prove the certain ſource of injuſtice, and every diſorder imaginable.

Our Author has led us to no higher principle, which might happily unite thoſe two very different ingredients; on the contrary, in the courſe of his reaſoning, he ſeems to have loſt ſight of the intereſt of others, and to have reduced the rule of juſtice to the ſtandard of ſelf-intereſt alone.

This will evidently appear, when we take a general view of the arguments, which he has multiplied upon this ſubject: And, in following the order which he has obſerved, we may have occaſion to make ſome further remarks upon his ſentiments and opinions.

If, with our Author, we ſuppoſe ſuch a natural profuſion of the neceſſaries and comforts of life, as that they may be a ready and eaſy purchaſe to every

every body; or, if we ſuppoſe ſuch a warm benevolence in the human heart, as to make men chearfully divide and communicate to others, what good things they poſſeſs; in ſuch caſes, the operations of juſtice will be reduced to a narrower ſphere; but its nature will ſtill remain the ſame, and it will be equally injurious to take away, either by fraud or force, what belongs to another.

In the firſt caſe, the operations of benevolence muſt evidently be alſo limited; but it will not from thence follow, that benevolence is not an original affection in the human breaſt, having for its immediate object, the good of others, independent of the view of its uſeful conſequences: This our Author admits, and has indeed clearly proved. Juſtice therefore, in the ſame manner, may have an original ſentiment, as its firſt monitor and ſpring, without attending to its publick utility, which requires ſome experience and reflection.

But if we ſhall reverſe the foregoing caſes into their oppoſite extremes, we ſhall find the objects of juſtice thereby varied, rather than its nature.

Suppose the caſe of extreme want, of war, of violent and unjuſt ſociety.

In the firſt caſe, no doubt a perſon in extreme want may lawfully take from another, without his conſent, ſuch of the neceſſaries of life, as he may ſpare; and that in order to ſelf-preſervation: But this will not prove a change in the nature of juſtice, but rather an enlargement of an antecedent obligation.

Every man is bound to ſupply the wants of the poor, according to his abilities: This obligation is, however, imperfect ſo long as the poor can make a hard ſhift to provide for themſelves; but in caſe they cannot, the obligation becomes perfect; and if not complied with, a poor man may take what belongs to another, in order to preſerve his life, without being unjuſt.

If a man is in a ſtate of war with others, or unhappily engaged in a company of ruffians, he may lawfully ſeize from either, what arms are neceſſary for his defence. There is really no alteration of juſtice here; but a change of the relations and regards of perſons, from which different duties muſt reſpectively ariſe. Thus I owe love and kind offices to a friend; but if that friend unjuſtly becomes my enemy, I may lawfully kill him, if I cannot otherwiſe preſerve my own life.

We have touched the foregoing matters but ſlightly, in regard they do not appear to throw much light upon the ſubject.

We

We ſhall now proceed to ſome other arguments inſiſted on by our Author, whereby he diſcovers his ſentiments, with more plainneſs and perſpicuity; and regulates juſtice (as has been hinted) by ſelf-intereſt alone.

He ſuppoſes a ſpecies of rational creatures, intermingled with men, yet of ſuch inferior ſtrength of body and mind, as that men had little to apprehend from their reſentment; we would, ſays he, be under no obligations of juſtice to ſuch creatures; and we might at pleaſure ſeize from them, any thing they poſſeſſed, without incurring the cenſure of being unjuſt; and he adds, as the reaſon of his aſſertion, that no inconveniency can reſult from the exerciſe of this power; and that in ſuch a caſe, the reſtraints of property and juſtice, are totally uſeleſs. He applies this doctrine to the caſe of the *Spaniards*; and ſufficiently intimates, that theſe might lawfully invade and deſpoil the barbarous *Indians*, becauſe the ſuperiority of their power, rendered theſe poor people very little the objects of their fear; and therefore, in conſequence of his foregoing opinion, the reſtraints of juſtice were uſeleſs, and to be ſet aſide.

He proceeds to mention the female ſex; and his argument leads us to conſider them in the ſame light. Their inferiority of ſtrength, muſt

cut

cut them off from any claim of right, and ſubject them to the capricious humours of their lordly maſters. This, he obſerves, is the caſe in many nations, though, at the ſame time, he indeed allows, that the females, by means of their inſinuation, addreſs, and charms, may, for the moſt part, ſecure to themſelves, the rights and privileges of ſociety.

THUS, the rights of the fair ſex are ſolely founded upon the external ornaments and graces of their perſons and behaviour; and conſequently, they muſt be as fluctuating and precarious, as we may ſuppoſe theſe to be, or as is the taſte and fancy of their arbitrary lords. They muſt ſubmit to every injury and violation, without complaint of injuſtice; ſince their only title fails them; in regard it has no influence to reſtrain their powerful invaders, whoſe taſte, good or bad, is hereby rendered the ſovereign law.

I SHALL not at preſent conteſt the truth of theſe opinions; but muſt obſerve, that, from this idea of juſtice given us by our Author, 'tis clear as ſun-ſhine, that he derives it, not from a right view of public utility, but from mere ſelf-intereſt. According to theſe reaſonings, we muſt obſerve juſtice with regard to thoſe who may be in a condition to hurt us, if we ſhould neglect it; but, ſo ſoon as a ſuperiority of power, raiſes us above

above ſuch fear, we are then no longer bound by any ties of juſtice; we may treat our inferiors as we pleaſe, and innocently break thro' all reſtraints of this kind.

Our Author next proceeds to figure certain imaginary caſes, where, for want of proper objects, there appears to be no room for the exerciſe of juſtice; and therefore, theſe caſes ſeem not to merit any particular conſideration.

In the ſecond part of his eſſay on this ſubject, he endeavours to ſhew, by a variety of obſervations, that the rules of juſtice and property were deviſed as being uſeful to the public, and tending to promote the intereſt of ſociety.

The uſefulneſs of theſe rules, no body indeed will diſpute: but, ſuperſeding at preſent a proper inquiry into the nature of juſtice, we may only obſerve, that all the particular inſtances here brought together by our Author, will not prove, that a ſenſe of public utility, was the real and proper motive for eſtabliſhing the rules of juſtice, becauſe theſe may be as readily accounted for from the motive of ſelf intereſt; and that, in an entire conſiſtency with his former opinions.

For, if we ſuppoſe men living in a ſtate of ſociety, without any natural principles of juſtice,

it

it will yet be their intereſt, even the intereſt of each individual, to agree upon certain rules of conduct with regard to one another: for otherwiſe, the ſociety would be in a ſtate of diſquiet, diſorder and diſtreſs, which each member would immediately feel for himſelf.

To prevent therefore this unhappy condition, which muſt affect each individual, it muſt appear the intereſt of every ſingle member of the ſociety, to concur in framing certain laws and regulations, by which a general order may be eſtabliſhed, and their intercourſes with one another rendered more beneficial and ſecure. And thus private intereſt, according to our Author's reaſonings, muſt be conſidered as the immediate ſource of juſtice, and not a real ſenſe of public utility; which is an object more remote and leſs affecting. That this is our Author's meaning, appears evident, without the leaſt ambiguity from what has been already ſaid; but it will receive additional confirmation, if we conſider ſome further obſervations made by him on this ſubject.

In the firſt paragraph of his fourth ſection, what, in the end of that paragraph, he calls the advantage of the public, he repreſents in the beginning of it, as the ſtrong intereſt of each individual.

He proceeds to obſerve, that different nations are under no ſuch neceſſity to practiſe the rules of juſtice towards one another, as individual members of the ſame ſociety are. And his reaſon for this aſſertion, ſeems plainly to be, becauſe acts of injuſtice, taking place amongſt members of the ſame ſtate, who are immediately connected together, muſt unavoidably produce diſorder and confuſion, and tend to inteſtine war. Whereas, the effects of injuſtice, committed by one ſtate againſt another, are not ſo ſenſibly felt, becauſe there is not ſuch an immediate intercourſe and connexion betwixt them. And therefore he allows, that reaſons of ſtate, (that is, private intereſt), may diſpenſe with rules of juſtice, and invalidate a treaty or alliance.

From theſe poſitions, it is evident, that the intereſt of one of the contracting parties, is made the meaſure of juſtice, and not the common intereſt, or the intereſt of both.

For, if the joint intereſt of both parties, is made the meaſure of juſtice, no particlar intereſt of one of them, can juſtify the breach of a treaty: this cannot be done upon the footing of common intereſt, till it becomes the intereſt of the other party likewiſe; in which caſe, the treaty will be abandoned by mutual conſent.

We

WE ſhall juſt add one obſervation more upon this ſubject. Our Author affirms, that robbers and pirates could not maintain their confederacies, without the obſervance of juſtice amongſt themſelves. This is indeed true; but ſurely it can never be ſuppoſed, that they act from a proper ſenſe of public utility, as it particularly includes the intereſt of their aſſociates; it is undoubtedly their private intereſt that binds them together, and it would be moſt abſurd to aſſign, as the motive of their confederacy, a ſentiment, which it is the deſign of that confederacy to counteract with regard to all other men. And when it may be added, that ſo ſoon as their aſſociation is at an end, they are commonly as apt to take undue advantages of one another, as ever they were to do with regard to ſtrangers.

THUS it appears, from the whole of our Author's reaſonings, as well as from his direct aſſertions, and inferences, that he deduces his idea of juſtice, ſolely from the private ſource of immediate ſelf-intereſt. This narrow principle is made its alone meaſure and ſtandard.

UPON this partial ſcheme, the right of my neighbour is nothing fixed in itſelf, but ever ſhifting, according to the ſeveral variations of my private intereſt.

THUS Nero, in a private ſtation, muſt at leaſt pay certain regards to the rights of others, in order to avoid the cenſure of the law, or the reſentment of his fellow citizens; but when abſolute power had raiſed him above both, he might do what miſchief a depraved ſpirit could prompt him to, without imputation of injuſtice.

NAY, a highwayman, a traitor, an aſſaſſin, act in theſe characters, from a motive of ſelf-intereſt; and therefore, if juſtice has no other ſource but this motive, they have an equal title to that virtue, with an honeſt tradeſman, a firm patriot, and an uncorrupted citizen.

THUS the diſtinctions betwixt juſtice and injuſtice, are abſolutely ſet aſide, and ſelf-intereſt is made the only ſtandard of moral conduct.

THESE conſequences are ſo ſhocking and abſurd, that our Author fairly deſerts them, and, in his fifth ſection, ſuppoſes public utility, as it eſpecially includes a diſintereſted regard to the good of others, to be the proper ſource of juſtice.

THIS has indeed a more promiſing appearance; but then it flatly contradicts his former theory, and is utterly inconſiſtent with it. We are, however, very willing to ſet that aſide, and ſhall proceed to conſider ſeparately, what aid and ſupport juſtice receives from the new principles, which,

which, in this place he thinks fit to adapt, or rather to ſuppoſe.

He conſiders human nature in every ſeparate point of light, and thence demonſtrates, that there is wrought into the human frame a principle of benevolence, which leads to the good of others as an agreeable object: by means of this principle, we enter into the concerns of thoſe of our own ſpecies, and a tender ſympathy with them, mixes itſelf with all our affections.

This principle of humanity is certainly real, and will readily be admitted; but then it can by no means diſtinguiſh the particular nature of juſtice. That juſtice differs in its form from general benevolence, is univerſally allowed; and our Author ſuppoſes it, when he treats them ſeparately. When he reſolves juſtice then into a regard to the good of others, what idea does he call up into our minds, beſides that of common benevolence? None certainly.

Does he mean, that juſtice regards the good of many jointly conſidered, but benevolence has for its object only one individual? This is apparently neither true of juſtice nor benevolence.

Let us try how this matter may be cleared up, by conſidering a particular example. If I give a ſum of money which I owe to an opu

lent creditor, to relieve the ſtraits of an indigent perſon, but am, by this donation, diſabled to pay my debt; this conduct is quite conformable to the views of benevolence, but contrary to the obligation of juſtice. It is ſurely a greater act of kindneſs, to relieve the neceſſities of an indigent perſon, than to increaſe the ſtores of one in affluence. Benevolence is intereſted in the firſt, but pretty indifferent to the laſt.

PERHAPS, it may be ſaid, that this conduct, tho' it immediately touches our benevolence, yet, attending to its conſequences, we diſcover it not to be good upon the whole; and that it is really a more rational benevolence to pay the debt. Should this be allowed, yet it is evident, that it turns benevolence off from an original ſentiment, and exhibits it as the reſult of a deliberate reflexion upon a train of conſequences. Now, this will not well tally with our Author's ſpeculations, which are all employed about the original force and influence of humanity.

BUT again, whence is it, that, in the caſe ſuppoſed, there ſhould appear greater good upon the whole, in payment of the debt? This can never be true, unleſs we ſuppoſe ſome particular reaſon why the creditor ſhould be preferred. That reaſon cannot be derived from the general ſentiment of humanity, which would plainly lead

lead to a different conduct. It muſt then be reſolved into a more particular ſentiment, which eſtabliſhes ſome natural claim in favour of the creditor; and which ſuggeſts to us an idea of his having good cauſe to expect a preference, and to complain of wrong, if he is diſappointed. Now, complaints of this kind, ſo natural and juſt, muſt evidently tend to the diſturbance of ſociety: they muſt occaſion animoſities, excite quarrels, and, when they prevail, introduce general diſorder.

BUT, it will further appear, that mere utility cannot be the object or ſource of juſtice, if we reflect upon what daily paſſes in the world, and is univerſally acknowledged by mankind.

WHAT is merely uſeful, is very commonly the object of public law, or the ſubject of private convention. Laws are daily enacted; covenants and agreements are entered into, in order to bring us under an obligation to do what is uſeful, either to the public or to individuals, and which obligation, we are ſenſible, was not incumbent on us, anterior to ſuch laws or covenants. Mere utility, therefore, cannot be the grounnd of this obligation, for that was the ſame before as after the law or paction; in theſe therefore we only can diſcover the true ſource of the obligation; and why they produce this effect, will be abundantly evident, if we conſider how

how neceſſary it is, even to the very being of ſociety, that they ſhould do ſo.

From the preceeding obſervations, the diſtinction betwixt juſtice and humanity, muſt appear in a clear light, in reſpect of their different objects. The general object of the one is neceſſity, and that of the other is utility.

The being and ſubſiſtence of ſociety depends upon juſtice, as the improvement and perfection of it depends upon humanity. The firſt is the great pillar which ſupports the ſolid fabric; the other gives it the finiſhing in the proper decoration of the parts.

It is true, theſe diſtinctions may become imperceptible, when the objects themſelves, approach towards the common boundary of both, as it often happens in ſimilar caſes; but when they are removed to any diſtance from that boundary, their difference will then appear in the cleareſt light.

From the ſource of juſtice which has now been pointed out, the obligation of that virtue, muſt appear to be different in kind, and much ſuperior to that of humanity.

This obligation cannot be diſpenſed with, becauſe upon it the right order and very being of

ſociety

ſociety depends. It muſt therefore exclude every immediate motive of ſelf-intereſt, and animate the mind with conſtancy and reſolution in the purſuit of juſtice, through all the dangers and difficulties to which we may be expoſed.

THUS, tho' we are not obliged to perform acts of liberality, which may exhauſt our private patrimony; yet ſuch acts of juſtice we ſometimes muſt perform; mere humanity does not require us to expoſe our lives to danger, to deliver another perſon from the ſame danger; but juſtice in many caſes, undoubtedly does this.

FROM theſe obſervations, it muſt appear evident, that our Author, by reſolving juſtice into humanity, altogether confounds theſe two very different virtues, whereby he muſt entirely loſe ſight of the peculiar obligation of juſtice.

THIS, he is indeed afterwards abundantly ſenſible of, when he conſiders that matter particularly, and endeavours to ſupport juſtice, in oppoſition to the influence of private intereſt. In this criſis, his principles utterly forſake him, and leaves him deſtitute of all reſources. Indeed, he inſinuates that the heart of man will rebel, and an antipathy riſe in his nature, in oppoſition to all baſe and unjuſt motives. This may be true, but not upon his ſcheme; for it does not afford the ſlighteſt foundation for ſuch antipathy; it muſt therefore

therefore ariſe from nobler principles, eſtabliſhed in the nature of man, and in the conſtitution to which he relates, but ſuch as our Author has not at all thought fit to inveſtigate and explain.

In order, therefore, ſtill more fully to expoſe the weakneſs and fallacy of our Author's ſcheme, we ſhall now proceed very ſhortly to delineate the general nature of juſtice, and to point out the principles, which do moſt effectually ſecure its obligation.

In proſecuting this deſign, we ſhall not perplex the ſubject, with the ſuppoſition of imaginary caſes, but ſhall conſider man juſt as Nature has made him; for it is only from ſuch a view, that the true idea of human juſtice can properly ariſe.

Such then is the nature and condition of man, that he ſtands in need of many external things to preſerve his being, and to procure any ſort of a comfortable ſubſiſtence in the world. He ſtands in need of many more to gratify thoſe enlarged deſires and capacities, with which he is endued; and thereby to increaſe the real comfort and happineſs of life.

For theſe purpoſes, Providence has richly ſtored this earth with a variety of objects, intended not only for neceſſity and uſe, but calculated to gratify all that variety of taſte in the human heart, which naturally correſponds to them.

Thus

THUS is man evidently dependent upon external things both for his ſubſiſtence and happineſs in this world. However, all theſe things, though neceſſary, are yet not ſufficient to make man happy.

IF we ſhould ſuppoſe a man to have every thing of this kind laid to his hand by the immediate bounty of Providence, and yet be cut off from all human ſociety and commerce, it is ſelf-evident, that ſuch a ſingle ſolitary being, muſt be extremely unhappy.

OUR conſtitution is plainly ſocial, and our hearts are faſhioned alike; we are formed for converſation, and the reciprocal intercourſe of benevolent and kind affections; and, in theſe mental exerciſes, the pureſt and moſt exalted happineſs we are capable of, conſiſts.

AS this ſocial make of man, with all its happy effects, will readily be admitted; inſtead of enlarging upon the proof of it, we ſhall make the following obſervation. That Nature has compleatly provided and prepared the neceſſaries of life for moſt other animals; but man can procure none of them, in any tollerable degree, without mutual aſſiſtance, and ſuch art and induſtry, as muſt employ a great many hands.

THIS appears to be a wiſe conſtitution of Providence; for hereby men are determined to cultivate

tivate ſociety, and thoſe connections are rendered neceſſary to our ſubſiſtence; from the due improvement of which, pleaſures of a nobler kind immediately ariſe.

But, in order to render ſociety ſafe and agreeable, every man muſt be ſecured in the poſſeſſion of thoſe things which belong to him as an individual, which are neceſſary to his ſubſiſtence, and correſpond to his natural wants and deſires. Our life and members, our liberty, our character and reputation, and even thoſe external things which we poſſeſs as neceſſary to ſupply our natural wants and exigencies, muſt all be rendered ſafe and ſecure to us; otherwiſe, we muſt be in a ſtate of continual uneaſineſs and apprehenſion, with regard to thoſe things which we naturally ſet the juſteſt value upon. Nature has made ſuch things our own, has given us a right to them, or has formed us in ſuch a manner, that without them we cannot be happy.

It is therefore ſelf-evident, that a ſociety muſt be miſerable, the members of which have no ſecurity againſt the unjuſt invaſions of one another. Mutual attacks upon ſuch things as Nature has appropriated to each, or eternal jealouſies, and apprehenſions of ſuch attacks, muſt render a ſocial ſtate the moſt painful and diſagreeable thing that can be; and conſequently muſt naturally tend to its diſſolution.

On

ON the other hand, let us ſuppoſe men influenced by ſuch a principle, as can diſtinguiſh the natural goods of one another, and lead them to to conſider them as not to be invaded upon any pretence whatever; ſuch a principle as will determine them to act in this regard to others, in the ſame manner they would reaſonably expect from theſe, in the like circumſtances: It is as evident, that a ſociety ſtrengthened, and united by ſuch a firm and equal tie, as we have ſuppoſed, muſt be in the moſt ſecure and agreeable ſtate imaginable.

IN this caſe, every man will he conſidered, as a guard upon the right and property of another; a mutual confidence will happily take place, founded upon the inward integrity of the heart, to the excluſion of all ſiniſter, partial or irregular motives.

WHEN ſociety is formed upon ſuch a noble plan as this, when the tie that binds it reaches the heart and ſecures the determined purpoſe of the mind, how pleaſing and agreeable muſt our ſocial intercourſe be? Upon what friendly terms muſt we converſe? With what an eaſy and delightful ſtream of joy muſt our affections mutually flow, when we conſider the rights of one another as ſacred, and not to be violated upon any ſuggeſtion or enticement of whatever particular

intereſt or paſſion? Juſtice is that virtue which produces all theſe noble effects; it is that internal tie which ſo happily eſtabliſhes the ſocial union, and opens the ſprings of ſo many bleſſings to mankind.

ON the other hand, injuſtice not only deprives of theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, but introduces all the contrary miſchiefs: Where that generally prevails, men can never be ſecure of the poſſeſſion of any natural good; all confidence and truſt muſt be baniſhed; a juſt diſlike of ſociety muſt make us ſhrink into a ſullen ſelfiſhneſs; and violence or fraud, will fill the world with the utmoſt diſtreſs.

HAVING given this general idea of juſtice, we ſhall conſider a little farther the nature of rights, which are the objects of it.

THOSE rights which are purely perſonal, which regard our life, liberty or reputation, are intimately founded in nature. He, who wantonly attacks any of theſe, does us a wrong or injury, which we are deeply ſenſible of; and it is evident, that we cannot live in an agreeable ſtate of ſociety with ſuch a perſon: There is therefore very little difficulty with regard to ſuch rights, they are ſo ſtrongly founded in nature.

NEXT

NEXT to theſe are the rights ariſing from family-connections, founded upon covenant, and ſtrengthened and enlarged by the natural tie of common children.

WE ſhall therefore chiefly conſider our right to ſuch external things, as are the common ſubjects of property.

Our connection, indeed, with ſuch things, is not ſo ſtrong and intimate, as with thoſe already mentioned, which are more immediately our own; yet, ſince theſe external things are neceſſary to our ſubſiſtence, to the comfort and happineſs of our lives; if there was no natural method of making them our own, they muſt remain the ſubjects of eternal diſpute; and conſequently prove an invincible obſtacle to ſociety. But there is in reality no ſuch defect in the conſtitution as this muſt appear; for Nature furniſhes us with methods of appropriating ſuch things, in a manner abundantly ſenſible.

THE ideas of thine and mine are clear, and common to all mankind. What things we acquire by our own induſtry, or lawfully receive from others, are juſtly accounted our own property: We certainly have a nearer connection with ſuch things than any other perſon has. If others therefore ſhould ſeize them as things in common, we will have a ſtrong natural ſenſe of injury

injury done us; and it is too plain to need any demonſtration, that this conduct muſt produce ſuch confuſion and diſorder, as is inconſiſtent with the nature of ſociety.

PERHAPS ſome of the methods of acquiring property, as they are enumerated by civilians, may be liable to diſpute; but Nature has furniſhed us with a remedy, which may, in a great meaſure, obviate the inconveniencies which this might occaſion.

WE are endued with the noble faculty of ſpeech, and can, by means of external ſigns, clearly convey our ſentiments to one another. Hereby we are enabled to enter into mutual engagements, and we naturally truſt one another with the performance of them: hence, truſt, and fidelity which correſponds to it, are plainly natural, and a breach of truſt, ever affects us with a ſtrong ſenſe of injury.

THUS is fidelity an eſſential bond of ſociety, a natural foundation of private contracts, and more general conventions. And, by means of theſe, any difficulties or doubts which may ariſe concerning the natural conſtitution of property, may be eaſily adjuſted and removed. It is true, that conventions or laws, when applied to particular caſes, may be liable to doubt and uncertainty; and may therefore be explained by

remote

remote analogies, and often, perhaps, in a pretty arbitrary manner. But the inconveniencies arising from hence, may be eaſily removed by ſubſequent conventions; eſpecially, when we ſuppoſe a real principle of juſtice eſtabliſhed in the heart.

From theſe few reflections upon the nature of right, it is evident, that it muſt regulate the conduct of one man towards another; and that a regard to it, is the eſſential bond of union in larger aſſociations of men.

IT is alſo evidently founded in the nature and conſtitution of man; and muſt therefore be the ſoul and ſpirit which animates civil laws, and no arbitrary effect created by them; for if we ſhould ſuppoſe, that the civil laws of any country did permit the aſſaulting of our perſons, the corrupting of our wives or children, the forcing from us ſuch goods as were the product of our induſtry, or we were otherwiſe in the unblameable poſſeſſion of; if they ſhould countenance perjury, infidelity and fraud of every kind; and if the general manners and practice of the people ſhould be conformable to ſuch laws, what would be the conſequence of this? Such an unnatural ſociety would immediately break up; men would rather go to the deſart, and truſt themſelves with wild beaſts, than live among their own ſpecies,

cies, when thus ſo entirely diveſted of humanity.

IT may, however, be proper here to obſerve, that natural juſtice, is not the ſole object of civil law; a thouſand other particular advantages are thereby intended to be ſecured, and theſe often ariſe from accidental and changeable circumſtances, and are accordingly liable to variations. Nay, even when it is the deſign of civil law, to ſecure the performance of natural juſtice, it does not attempt to do ſo in a direct manner, as it cannot immediately reach the heart; but it purſues this end, by means of external ſanctions, ſuited to the genius and circumſtances of the people, whereby the practice of juſtice is rendered ſafe, and the violation of it dangerous and hurtful.

IT may indeed happen, in the caſe of a general corruption of manners, that the juſt execution of law will be neglected, or its remedies prove ineffectual to ſtem the torrent of vice. In ſuch a caſe, it will ſenſibly appear, what wretched ſubſtitutes the beſt political inſtitutions are, where inward integrity, and native virtue are wanting at the heart.

Quid leges ſine moribus
Vanæ proficiunt?

WHAT

WHAT an infinite difference muſt there then be betwixt that nominal juſtice, which is the mere effect of civil law, and can only regulate thoſe actions which fall under the view of others; and that real juſtice which penetrates the heart, which forms the genuine character, and influences the ſecret and internal ſprings of action.

WE ſhall ſtill have a clearer idea of the nature of juſtice, when we conſider the rule which governs it, and the motives and obligations by which it is eſtabliſhed.

THE rule of juſtice is deducible from the natural equality of mankind. Men have a common nature, and are to be conſidered as on an equal footing. They equally value life, and need thoſe ſupplies that are neceſſary to ſupport it. Health, liberty, reputation, and other natural goods, are equally deſired and ſought after; and their oppoſites are in the ſame manner avoided. The plain and natural rule of juſtice, therefore, muſt be, that we treat others in the ſame manner as we would reaſonably deſire or expect that they ſhould treat us: or, to conſider the ſame principle in another light, men ſhould behave towards one another, in ſuch manner, as they would imagine a ſpectator, who had an equal and impartial regard to all, would approve of.

IT is indeed true, that there are certain differences betwixt one man and another; yet theſe are not of that kind, as ſhould in the leaſt infringe the forementioned equal rule of juſtice. One man may be wiſer or ſtronger than another; but all man have, or muſt be ſuppoſed to have, an equal regard and affection to the natural goods they poſſeſs. If one man, therefore, from ſuperior force or cunning, ſhould deprive another of his natural right, that other would watch every opportunity to do juſtice to himſelf, and a change in the circumſtances of the perſons, or a thouſand accidents might readily furniſh him one. If ſuch conduct was then to be allowed, it is evident, that it muſt take away all truſt from among men, render every right entirely precarious, and tend to the ſeparation of one man from another, as well as to the diſſolution of larger aſſociations.

JUSTICE is that common bond which unites mankind, which ſecures that ſocial intercourſe upon which all other bleſſings depend. Juſtice muſt therefore claim a ſuperior regard, and all more particular attachments muſt give place to it. Juſtice changes the ſituation in which ſelf-love is apt to place us, and make us look upon others, in the ſame light as we regard ourſelves.

IT alſo ſuſpends the affection we bear to our friends; for juſtice muſt certainly claim the preference

ference to friendſhip; and for the very ſame reaſon to the love of our country. Juſtice is the cauſe of human nature; we muſt firſt pay the debt due to man as ſuch, and we ſhall ſtill find room enough to diſtinguiſh our particular regards to our friends and our country. Upon theſe we may chiefly beſtow our love and affection; we may do numberleſs kind offices, and perform ſignal ſervices to them, when juſtice will not in the leaſt interfere.

FROM what has been ſaid, it muſt appear, that juſtice is a virtue of the nobleſt order, and greateſt dignity, ſubjecting ſelf love, and alſo the narrower ſphere of the ſocial affections, to the more public and important intereſts of mankind.

HENCE the ancient philoſophers have beſtowed the higheſt applauſes upon juſtice, and placed it in the moſt ſublime and illuſtrious ſituation. Cicero calls it the queen and miſtreſs of all other virtues; he affirms, that the fear of poverty, baniſhment, death, or any preſent calamity whatever, ſhould never induce us to forſake it; and thoſe political aſſociations, of which the individuals would confine juſtice to themſelves, and refuſe it to foreigners, he very properly terms conſpiracies againſt human nature.

As juſtice is a virtue ſo extenſive and important, and its atchievements are often as difficult,

as

as they are illuſtrious, it muſt needs require a very firm and ſolid foundation, fully to ſupport it.

IT has been already proved, that juſtice, with regard to its external objects, is founded in the neceſſity, and not the mere utility of human ſociety. But juſtice, as a moral virtue, is ſeated in the heart, and muſt be formed upon peculiar principles.

WE may be able with great preciſion, to aſcertain the external objects and offices of juſtice; and yet be deſtitute of that internal principle which is neceſſary to engage us to the conſtant and uniform practice of it.

SUCH a principle can only be formed by theſe views and motives of good, which are able to communicate ſufficient ſtrength and reſolution to the active powers of the mind. We ſhall therefore now make a few reflections upon the proper foundation of this ſo important virtue.

OUR underſtanding enables us to examine the nature of ſociety, and to diſcover all thoſe mutual regards, which are neceſſary to the ſupport of it; as alſo, what conduct on the other hand, has a tendency to its ſubverſion.

BUT the perceptions we have of theſe things, are not calm, unaffecting, and purely ſpeculative. The Author of our nature has wiſely accompa-

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nied them with certain warm and lively ſentiments, calculated to influence our practice.

HENCE philoſophers have derived the idea of a moral ſenſe. This moral ſenſe evidently recommends juſtice to us as an agreeable object; it leads us to the practice of it, not only under the character of beautiful, but repreſents it alſo in the light of duty and obligation. This is the ſource of that ſecret ſatisfaction which attends an upright conduct. Hence alſo that painful remorſe which we feel, when we are conſcious of an action manifeſtly unjuſt. The apprehenſions of guilt in ſuch a caſe, are ever conſidered as natural; and Juvenal deſcribes them in the following ſtrong manner,

Evaſiſſe putes, quos diri conſcia facti,
Mens habet attonitos.

Hi ſunt qui trepidant, et ad omnia fulgura pallent
Cum tonat, exanimes primo quoque murmure cæli.

BUT, as we have already conſidered the nature and force of the moral ſenſe, and in what reſpect it is in itſelf an imperfect principle of virtue, it is unneceſſary here to repeat what has been ſaid to that purpoſe.

IT may be worth while, however, to conſider the moral ſenſe a little further, in ſo far as it attends and enlightens our reflexions upon juſtice,

and

and is itſelf corrected by theſe, and hereby we may ſtill obtain clearer diſcoveries of the nature of that virtue.

THE moral ſenſe, therefore, is an immediate monitor, and prompt to our duty, and ſupplies the place of ſlower reaſoning and reflexion. At the ſame time, it is not ſo ſure a guide, eſpecially in complex caſes; in theſe, it will need the aſſiſtance of reflexion, to rectify its miſtakes, and governs its influence.

THE intellectual faculty muſt place the proper object before the moral ſenſe, in its compleat natural proportions, and then the report of that ſenſe may be abundantly faithful and juſt, which it cannot be expected will be the caſe, if the object is miſplaced, or imperfectly repreſented.

IT may be proper to illuſtrate what is above hinted, by a particular example.

DARIUS HYSTASPIS made an expedition againſt the Scythians, and, in order to ſecure his retreat, he laid a bridge over the Danube, and gave the command of it to certain Greek officers, in whom, as being in poſſeſſion of large governments under him, he repoſed a particular confidence. Of theſe commanders, the famous Miltiades happened to be one. Darius met with bad ſucceſs in his expedition; whereupon Miltiades

tiades propoſed to deſtroy the bridge, which would occaſion the ruin of the King and his army, and it would then be in their power to reſtore freedom and ſecurity to the Grecian ſtates.

THIS counſel was rejected, and Miltiades made his eſcape. Cornelius Nepos, who narrates this fact, greatly applauds the purpoſe of Miltiades, becauſe he preferred the liberty of his countrymen to his own particular intereſt.

BUT this Roman writer appears to have been too much preoccupied with a favourite object, the love of his country: for, if we take a juſt and extenſive view of the whole circumſtances of the caſe, we muſt highly condemn the propoſal of Miltiades, as contrary to gratitude, fidelity, and allegiance, the ſtrongeſt ties which can bind human nature.

THE common rights of mankind, muſt undoubtedly claim a preference to every particular attachment, the love of our country not excepted.

FOR this reaſon it is, we beſtow ſo much applauſe upon the juſtice of the Athenians, who, in a popular aſſembly, rejected the motion of a very beneficial ſecret enterprize made by Themiſtocles, becauſe Ariſtides reported it was unjuſt.

JUSTICE is the common tie which binds human nature, and an offence againſt it, is, at leaſt in its tendency, injurious to the whole.

WE form indeed our firſt notions of juſtice, from particular inſtances, and as it relates to individuals.

I have a natural ſenſe of injury, when another wreſts from me what I poſſeſs as the fruit of my own induſtry: If I ſhould uſe another in the like manner, I eaſily reflect upon the wrong which he muſt alſo feel; and ſo muſt conſider myſelf as injurious; and I further perceive, that it is not poſſible to cultivate any agreeable intercourſe betwixt us upon ſuch terms.

WHEN the idea of juſtice (which thus begins at particular inſtances) is extended to larger ſocieties of men, its nature ſtill remains the ſame; only from its more extenſive influence, it appears in a more beautiful and engaging light.

IT is not therefore true, that the product of a man's art or induſtry, ought to be ſecured to him, for no other reaſon but to give encouragement to ſuch uſeful habits and accompliſhments, for the good of ſociety, as our Author alledges p. 52.; for ſuch encouragement previouſly ſuppoſes an affection of property to be natural to man, without which, he muſt be entirely indifferent about

about the ſecurity of it. Now if ſuch affection be natural, it cannot poſſibly have any objects more natural than ſuch things as are the fruit of a man's own art and induſtry.

To mention another example, our guilt is equal when we murder a man upon a deſart iſland for the ſake of his money, as when we commit the ſame crime upon a fellow citizen. It is true, in the laſt of theſe caſes, the violation of juſtice is more inconvenient and dangerous; (which conſideration, our Author would make the ſole motive to juſtice); but from our natural ſenſe of things, the crime is plainly the ſame. Nor can the greater proſpect of impunity, which takes place in the firſt caſe, afford the ſmalleſt alleviation.

As individuals are bound to one another by the common ties of juſtice, ſo collective bodies and ſtates are bound entirely in the ſame manner, and upon the ſame principles.

WE can never imagine, that men, by forming voluntary aſſociations, and eſtabliſhing themſelves into large ſocieties, are thereby at liberty to diſpenſe with thoſe rules of juſtice which they were formerly bound to obſerve. Such a ſuppoſition could ariſe from no other idea than this, that men, by rendering themſelves more powerful, might therefore be at liberty to oppreſs their

weaker neighbours, becauſe theſe are not in a condition to defend themſelves, or to hurt their unjuſt invaders. Such a view of things is equally ſhocking to moral ſentiment, and inconſiſtent with the general good.

IF we ſuppoſe an impartial ſpectator, or an angel from heaven, to take a view of human affairs; he might indeed ſee one prince or ſtate lay hold of a favourable opportunity unjuſtly to ſeize the territory of another. But what would be his ſentiments of ſuch conduct with regard to the intereſt of mankind in general? It would plainly appear, that one ſtate juſt loſt as much as another gained; and in this reſpect, the general intereſt would remain the ſame as it was before. But our diſintereſted ſpectator would further obſerve a right violated, a treaty broke, and ſuch diſtruſt and reſentment thence ariſing, as muſt weaken the common tie, and diſturb the peace and tranquillity of the public.

THE purview of juſtice, is to render the intercourſes of men with one another, in all poſſible occurrences, ſafe and agreeable, by ſecuring their natural rights from violation upon any pretence whatever; and to this great and general end, all our particular intereſts muſt give place, as has been already obſerved.

FROM

FROM what has been ſaid, it may appear, that the moral ſenſe at once points out to us the offices of juſtice; and when conſidered with all its modifications, has a conſiderable influence to enforce the practice of it. When we add to this, the benefits reſulting to each individual from the general practice of juſtice, the motives to that virtue muſt be greatly increaſed.

ON the other hand, when we reflect upon the ſtrength of thoſe paſſions and contrary intereſts, which thwart the operations of juſtice, its obligation will hardly appear to be fully ſecured from all that has hitherto been ſaid.

IN order therefore to gain this important point, it will be neceſſary to ſupport the cauſe of juſtice, by ſuch motives and conſiderations, as religion may furniſh; and ſurely it cannot reaſonably be thought an impropriety, to ſuppoſe that thoſe moral ſentiments which reſpect the great Author of our particular frame, and of all things elſe, and thoſe which unite us to one another, may be ſo connected, as that the laſt may receive their compleat force and vigour from the firſt.

WE ſhall be the more convinced of the truth of this, if we duly reflect upon the inequality and imperfection of other motives, and at the ſame time conſider the ſuperior, and unqueſtionable force of the religious principle.

As this topic has been inſiſted on in the former ſection, we ſhall need to add but a few obſervations peculiarly adapted to the nature of juſtice.

JUSTICE is a virtue which prevents ſelf-love from invading the rights of others; and the perfection of ſociety depends upon the inviolable maintenance of theſe rights. The province of juſtice is therefore in many caſes difficult and painful, as it muſt often oppoſe ſtrong paſſions which lead a different way. The immediate motives to juſtice will, for this reaſon, hardly appear ſufficient in ſuch caſes to ſecure its influence. If, by ſecret acts of injuſtice, a man may extricate himſelf from a ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs, and riſe to an eaſy and opulent condition, ſuch acts of injuſtice may appear more inviting than any ſenſe of general intereſt, and may even baffle all the influence of moral ſentiment; and if this be the caſe, the conſequence muſt be very dangerous; for juſtice will be thereby rendered, in a great meaſure, dependent upon private intereſt; and as every man eſtimates this according to his particular taſte, the practice of juſtice muſt be rendered very uncertain; and the view of this muſt lay ſuch a foundation of jealouſy and diſtruſt, as is inconſiſtent with the perfection of ſociety, and which no natural expedients can remove.

BUT

BUT let us ſuppoſe a perſon of ſuch a diſpoſition to juſtice, of ſuch a firm purpoſe to purſue it in every caſe, as that no inconveniencies or dangers are able to diſcourage him; ſuch a perſon will yet have the mortification to reflect, that it will be impoſſible for him to accompliſh the happy effect of univerſal juſtice, whilſt others do not concur with him in it. Beſides, he will act upon a very unequal footing with moſt other men; for, whilſt he maintains an inviolable regard to their rights, they, on the other hand, will often take undue advantages of him, whereby he muſt meet with peculiar loſſes and inconveniencies: nor will the reflection upon an upright conduct, if that is his ſole recompence, always appear to be a ſufficient one; eſpecially, when ſuch reflexion is attended with this circumſtance, that his conduct puts it often in the power of bad men, to deprive him of many of the real advantages of life.

FROM conſiderations of this kind, and ſuch as have been formerly mentioned, it may ſufficiently appear, that juſtice ſtands in need of ſuperior principles compleatly to ſupport it, and give it its full effect.

WE ſhall now endeavour to ſhew, that religion naturally furniſhes with ſuch principles.

IN

IN the firſt place, religion improves the immediate principles of juſtice, as it beautifies and enlarges the moral ſentiments. It repreſents human ſociety, as intended for a perpetual duration, and this gives us the elevating hope of that happy union, which ſhall be the reſult of juſtice. Nothing hath a ſtronger tendency, to awaken every noble ſentiment in the mind, than ſuch a view of things as this: The opinion of a ſhort precarious exiſtence, bounded by the narrow limits of this life, is apt to contract all the faculties of the ſoul. It repreſents the concerns of mankind, as of little conſequence, incapable of exciting any lively ſentiments in our breaſt. But if we ſhall conſider man, as derived from the ſame common Author, and as intended for a perpetual ſociety hereafter, ſuch a view of things muſt add great ſtrength to the ſocial tie, and place the intereſts of mankind in the ſtrongeſt point of light.

FROM the beautiful and affecting contemplation which is hereby preſented to the mind, the moral ſentiments muſt acquire new life and vigour, and operate upon the conduct with more firmneſs and conſtancy.

This is elegantly repreſented to us, by Cicero, in the following paſſage. *Sicut una eademque natura, mundus omnibus partibus inter ſe congruentibus, cohaeret; ſic omnes homines inter ſe natura con-*

fuſi

fuſi, pravitate diſſentiunt; nec ſe intelligunt eſſe conſanguineos, et ſubjectos omnes ſub unam eandemque tutelam; quod ſi teneretur, Deorum profecto vitam homines viverunt.

IT muſt be therefore evident, that the motive to juſtice muſt be greatly increaſed, from ſuch a view of things as has been now repreſented.

BUT ſtill, as that motive is founded upon immediate moral ſentiment, it is, in ſome degree, liable to the imperfections already mentioned; and as ſuch ſentiment is often unequal, and inconſtant, we ſhall ſcarcely be able from hence, to eſtabliſh ſuch an obligation to juſtice, as will ſupport it in all caſes, and under all temptations; and yet ſuch an obligation, the idea of a perfect ſociety neceſſarily requires.

WE muſt therefore carry our thoughts ſtill higher, and conſider juſtice as the law of our Creator; a law neceſſary to the public good.

IT is true, an exact obedience to this law, may often expoſe us to great inconveniencies; but ſubmiſſion is ſtill our duty, and ſelf-love muſt give place to the greater good of the whole, which is an object more agreeable to the Deity, than any particular intereſt of ours.

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THE authority of the ſupreme Creator, muſt, in itſelf, appear of ſufficient force, fully to ſecure the obligation of juſtice. Or if men ſhould be diſpoſed even to contemn that, they muſt have good reaſon to apprehend the juſt effects of divine vengeance.

Diſcite juſtitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos.

How many things, ſays *Cicero*, are confirmed by an oath; how ſacred are thoſe treaties which are ratified by religion; and how many men are with-held from wickedneſs by the apprehenſion of divine vengeance? How perfect and inviolate, muſt that ſociety be, which is maintained by the authority of the Gods, the witneſſes and judges of our conduct?

As juſtice is the virtue upon which the perfect order of ſociety depends, it muſt appear to be a very vain conceit to ſearch for a principle of order, amidſt a fortuitous jumble of atoms, where all idea of order muſt be totally loſt.

The natural ſentiments of juſtice, particularly the very remarkable principle of conſcience, have a manifeſt relation to a divine moral government, from which they can only receive their true meaning, and proper improvement.

WHAT is ſo clear in theory, perhaps needs not the ſupport of teſtimony. I ſhall however at preſent

preſent mention one or two authorities, in confirmation of it.

CICERO, in his Offices, informs us, that the Romans placed the ſtatue of fidelity in the Capitol, next to that of Jupiter himſelf; and in his Treatiſe *de natura Deorum*, plainly intimates his opiuion, that if we ſhould ſet aſide religion, every branch of juſtice would be overthrown. His words are, *Atque haud ſcio, an pietate adverſus Deos ſublata, fides etiam, et ſocietas humani generis, et una excellentiſſima virtus, juſtitia, tollatur.* I ſhall only further add, that Ovid, whom none will ſuſpect of enthuſiaſm, was of the very ſame opinion.

LIVE innocently, ſays he, for the Deity is preſent; reſtore the depoſite; let piety maintain its juſt influence; abſtain from fraud, and keep your hands pure from blood.

Innocue vivite, Numen adeſt.
Reddite depoſitum, pietas ſua foedera ſervet;
Fraus abſit, vacuas cedis habete manus.

WE are therefore led to this unavoidable concluſion, that it is the ſuperior influence of religion alone, which can render the obligation to juſtice (of all the virtues, the moſt arduous and important) firm, uniform, and compleat.

IT

IT is to be regreted, that we have loſt a dialogue of Cicero's concerning juſtice. Lactantius, in his treatiſe of that ſubject, has preſerved a few fragments of it. Furius, in the perſon of Carneades, endeavours to ſubvert juſtice; and Cicero ſupports it in the perſon of Lælius. Furius, in order to gain his point, introduces ſelf-love, and ſets it in full oppoſition to the purview of juſtice, in order to prove that virtue to be mere folly. If, ſays he, in a ſhipwreck, one man ſhould be making his way to ſhore upon a plank, and another ſtronger than he, but juſt ready to ſink, ſhould come up with him; whether, ſays Furius, ſhould the ſtrong man ſeize the plank to ſave himſelf, and let the other periſh? He anſwers, if he be wiſe, he will do it, but he will be unjuſt: if he be juſt, he will not do it, but he will be a fool.

IN this, and other examples of the like nature there mentioned, Cicero and Furius are agreed in their notions of juſtice: and they muſt be ſo, unleſs we make force or private intereſt the meaſure of it. In theſe caſes, Cicero ſeems to be much gravelled to maintain the cauſe of juſtice upon common topics: he is therefore obliged to carry his thoughts higher; a juſt man, ſays he, conſiders his bleſſings as divine, *bona ſua divina judicat.*

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LACTANTIUS takes up the argument, and endeavours to maintain the cauſe of juſtice in the manner following.

HE conſiders equity as the meaſure of it. By equity he means that idea or ſentiment which ariſes from this conſideration, that men are placed in the world by God in a natural ſtate of equality, and ſhould therefore treat one another as upon equal terms. Lactantius, in order to ſecure this rule of equity, and to preſerve it from the violation of ſelf-love, ſuperadds piety, as the juſt and proper motive to gain this happy effect; and thereby he ſufficiently vindicates the obſervance of juſtice from the imputation of folly. He illuſtrates the force of this principle from the practice of the Chriſtians.

HE gives a very moving and pathetic deſcription of the ſufferings to which they were univerſally expoſed, which nothing could exceed, but that invincible patience which aſtoniſhed their perſecutors.

FOR this, ſays he, the Heathens think us the arranteſt fools in nature, when we might avoid all theſe torments, by taking a little incenſe betwixt our fingers, and throwing it in the fire.

BUT he juſtifies their conduct, from conſiderations of piety, and the regards we ſtand in to God.

SHALL the Heathens, ſays he, praiſe to the ſkies thoſe who were willing to loſe their life for a friend? and muſt we be thought fools, if we are ready to loſe ours for our God? A ſlave, he adds, who deſerts his maſter, a ſon who abandons his father, are by men deemed infamous, and deſerving of the ſevereſt puniſhment. And could we be guiltleſs, if we ſhould deſert God, who is our parent and our maſter, in a much ſuperior ſenſe?

THUS religion appears to be the firmeſt guard of juſtice, and able to ſupport it in the ſevereſt trials.

THE dignity of juſtice ſeems to ariſe chiefly from this conſideration, that it ſubjects ſelf-intereſt to the public good. Hence that applauſe, which is beſtowed upon the heroes of antiquity, Hercules, Codrus, Regulus, the Decii, and other great men; who, by ſerving their country, at the expence of every thing dear to themſelves, have tranſmitted their names to poſterity with immortal honour.

BUT ſuch noble atchievements of juſtice can never be reconciled to the councils of wiſdom, without the mediation of religion. The religious principle muſt be ſuppoſed to enter into the motive, in ſome degree or other; otherwiſe it muſt be accounted downright enthuſiaſm, deſtitute of a rational ſupport; and which therefore muſt

muſt languiſh and die away before a cool and deliberate reflexion.

FROM the ſlighteſt review of theſe ſhort obſervations made upon the nature and force of the obligation of juſtice, it will appear, that our duty and our intereſt muſt influence us to the practice of it.

JUSTICE is not founded in particular paſſions, or private intereſt. It is a generous principle, capable of the higheſt improvement, from a nobler, tho' more remote view of public good; and it is often oppoſed by the former intereſt.

IT is not the mere reſult of humanity; for that could not ſufficiently diſtinguiſh its nature, nor ſupport it in oppoſition to contrary paſſions.

IT is a peculiar tye, neceſſary to connect the parts of the ſocial ſyſtem, and to produce the greateſt good upon the whole: and, viewed in this light, it muſt not only excite the moſt agreeable and elevating ſentiments, but muſt alſo appear to be the will of the Deity, who plans the general good; and in this reſpect, we ought ever to comply with it, and muſt certainly find our own account in ſo doing.

SECT. III.

Of CHASTITY.

IT may be obſerved with regard to the various paſſions and affections which take place in the human breaſt; that ſome of them have a real and permanent foundation in nature; and therefore, in every poſſible ſituation in which men can be placed, their fitneſs and propriety muſt be diſcoverable. Of this ſort, are the natural ſentiments and affections of humanity and juſtice: we cannot figure any ſtate of human ſociety, in which theſe virtuous diſpoſitions are not the real ſources of good.

BUT there are other paſſions which relate to a particular and temporary conſtitution, and are therefore of a more arbitrary nature. Of theſe, the paſſion betwixt the ſexes, is perhaps the moſt remarkable.

As that paſſion relates to a temporary purpoſe in the imperfect ſtate of human ſociety, it is therefore but of a temporary nature, and can have no propriety in relation to a perfect ſtate of mankind.

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As the end and deſign of it is, however, of the greateſt importance, for that reaſon it was fit it ſhould be ſtrong. But, as according to the ſtrength of the paſſion itſelf, the conſequences of its irregularity muſt be proportionally fatal, it was alſo fit, that we ſhould be provided in proper means for its due government and regulation.

CHASTITY is the virtue to whoſe province this important office is aſſigned; and we ſhall afterwards have occaſion, to take ſome notice of the remarkable aſſiſtance which this virtue receives from the provident care of nature.

IN the mean time, it may be proper to make ſome remarks upon the extraordinary account which our Author gives of this virtue of chaſtity.

THIS virtue, in p. 66. he obſerves, regards the married ſtate, and is founded in the need that children have of the care and ſupport of their parents. He adds, that without ſuch utility, it will readily be owned, ſuch a virtue would never have been thought of. He further obſerves, that the rules of chaſtity have all a reference to generation; and that tho' women paſt child-bearing, are not ſuppoſed exempted from them; yet he affirms, that general rules are often extended beyond the principle whence they firſt ariſe; and this in all matters of taſte and ſentiment. He afterwards aſcribes this to the ima-

gination, in oppoſition to the judgment. The plain purport of theſe obſervations is, that to deem chaſtity a virtue in old women, is the reſult of an irregular imagination, ſtretching a natural ſentiment beyond its proper bounds; and that it diſcovers a real want of true judgment.

THESE venerable matrons, therefore, to whom chaſtity does not properly belong, may give a full indulgence to all the pleaſures of love and gallantry (provided the want or weakneſs of paſſion allows them to have any pleaſure at all;) and that, in a perfect conſiſtence with innocence and virtue.

ONE caution indeed is given them by our Author, that they manage their intrigues with ſecrecy and diſcretion, leſt the younger ſort ſhould, in imitation of their betters, be tempted to try pleaſures, of which they only can have a true reliſh, but from the indiſcriminate indulgence of which, they are totally excluded, till wrinkles and grey hairs give them a proper title.

THESE ſentiments of our Author, are very natural ſteps to lead him to the opinion which he afterwards takes up, whereby he diſmiſſes chaſtity altogether. For, in p. 247. upon pretence of preferring, what he calls the agreeable, to the uſeful, he would remove every reſtraint of a free commerce betwixt the ſexes: and adds,

"Inſtances

"Inſtances of licence daily multiplying, will "weaken the ſcandal with the one ſex, and "teach the other, by degrees, to adopt the fa- "mous maxim of La Fontaine with regard to fe- "male infidelity, That if one knows it, it is but "a ſmall matter; if one knows it not, it is no- "thing." Thus (our Author having eſtabliſhed two ſources of virtue, the uſeful and the agreeable) he here, upon pretence of the agreeable, ſupports infidelity to the marriage-bed, or, in common language, adultery, in oppoſition to two virtues united, both founded, by his own admiſſion, upon the uſeful, *viz.* juſtice and chaſtity.

'TIS eaſy to ſee how far this notion may lead us; and that, from the idea of the agreeable, a man may deſire, and, if he ſafely can, endeavour to poſſeſs his neighbour's eſtate, as well as his wife, and perhaps the laſt may be more agreeable to the greateſt part of men, than the firſt.

THERE appears no need of much argument to refute theſe abſurdities. We ſhall therefore but ſhortly conſider, how far chaſtity is founded in nature, and is really a part of the human frame, eſpecially as it regards the female ſex.

LOVE between the ſexes, is a natural paſſion deeply rooted in the human heart, for a very important end. At the ſame time, it is not, as

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in other animals, limited and reſtrained by that end; its influence goes a great deal further. And ſuch often is its impetuoſity, that it is apt to hurry us into very irregular and pernicious exceſſes. It muſt then be happy for us, if we can find a principle in our nature calculated to check the irregularities, and prevent the diſorders of this paſſion. Such a principle is chaſtity; a virtue, whoſe nature and province it is, ſo to regulate and govern the paſſion of love, as to ſecure to us its real bleſſings, and prevent its hurtful, and frequently fatal effects. This is, no doubt, a province of the utmoſt importance to us; yet we muſt examine it with abundance of reſerve, and be contented with ſome general obſervations.

THE ſmalleſt reflexion muſt make it evident, what wonderful art and contrivance Providence has diſcovered to make an eminent diſtinction betwixt man and the inferior animals. Theſe have no nice feelings in their nature at all; they are guided by an immediate and unceremonial inſtinct. But with regard to man, 'tis beautiful to obſerve, that nature has placed the two ſexes, deſigned for the ſtricteſt union, yet, in the mean time, at the greateſt diſtance from one another, and that by intervention of certain delicate and agreeable ſenſations, intimately wrought into the conſtitution of each.

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THE one ſex is inſpired with awe and reſpect, a kind of veneration ariſing from the ſuppoſed virtue and dignity of the other; and theſe ſentiments forbid the raſh and unhallowed approach which beauty would ſeem to ſolicit. The other ſex maintain their diſtance, by a graceful modeſty, a decent pride, and inward conſciouſneſs of worth. Theſe ſentiments are as naturally, as elegantly, expreſſed by Milton.

Greatneſs of mind, and nobleneſs their ſeat
Build in her loveliеſt, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

And,

She heard me thus, and tho' divinely brought,
Yet innocence, and virgin modeſty,
Her virtue; and the conſcience of her worth
That would be woo'd, and, not unſought, be won,
Not obvious, not obtruſive, but retir'd,
The more deſirable.

THE tender impreſſions are no doubt mutual; but it is the privilege of the one, to make an honourable advance, and the beauty of the other, to make a decent defence.

THE one approaches by all the gentle offices which a kind complacence can inſpire: if the other yields, it is yet with a reluctant modeſty, and only in full confidence of a ſincere and permanent affection. And hence an union of hearts

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is formed upon the faith of an indiſſoluble friendſhip, ſweetened and refined by the ſoft endearments of a tender paſſion. Theſe are but imperfect ſketches of the inimitably beautiful and delicate movements of the mind, in the paſſion of love; a paſſion which enters deep into the human conſtitution, and makes a conſiderable figure in the hiſtory of mankind.

WHAT then does Nature intend, by thus arraying the paſſion of love with all this profuſion of agreeable ſentiments? Does ſhe only mean to recommend a ſelfiſh and ſenſual gratification? No, ſhe plainly points out to us, reſpect, modeſty, mutual tenderneſs, conſtancy, and faith: and all this beautiful aſſemblage enters into the idea of chaſtity. Nature ſeems to have taken particular care, that we ſhould not forget the reſemblance we bear to nobler ranks of beings; even whilſt we taſte thoſe corporeal pleaſures common to us with the brute creation. Nay, ſhe will not ſo much as allow the conſcious dignity, inſpired by ſo many moral graces, to excuſe the bluſhes ariſing from thoſe groſſer ſenſations.

THUS chaſtity plainly appears to be a real and natural, as well as an important virtue; tho', no doubt, for reaſons needleſs to be mentioned, it is more eſſential and ornamental to the female ſex.

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As chaſtity is thus ſtrongly rooted in nature, it is no leſs recommended by its happy influence, and agreeable effects. It reſpectively ſecures the peace, the faith, the friendſhip, and honour of either ſex, and all the ſweet interchanges of mutual love. Whereas the contrary vice muſt reverſe this agreeable ſcene; nay, and often view with an unfeeling heart the wretchedneſs, infamy, and ruin of the perſon once beloved, and who repoſed too great truſt in the ſlippery faith of man. I cannot conclude this ſubject better, than in my Lord Shaftſbury's words. "There "can be no ſlavery, ſays he, (ſpeaking of love), "greater than what is conſequent to the domi- "nion and rule of this paſſion. Of all other it "is the leaſt manageable by favour or conceſſion, "and aſſumes the moſt from privilege and indul- "gence. What it coſts us in the modeſty and "ingenuity of our natures, and in the faith and "honeſty of our characters, is as eaſily appre- "hended by any one who will reflect. And it "will from hence appear, that there is no paſſion "which, in its extravagance and exceſs, more "neceſſarily occaſions diſorder, and unhappi- "neſs."

THOUGH it may indeed appear needleſs, yet we ſhall make a very few reflexions upon what ſeems to have been the ſenſe of mankind, eſpecially with regard to female chaſtity. This virtue has always

always been conſidered by the poets, as an eſſential ingredient in the purity and felicity of the golden age; and, when this happy period gave way to the prevailing corruption of manners, they have ſtill regarded chaſtity as an attendant on the innocence of a rural life. Thus Virgil enumerates it among the bleſſings of that calm and peaceful ſtate;

Caſta pudicitiam ſervat domus.

'TIS certain, that all nations of the world have had a particular regard to this virtue, and ever have annexed infamy and reproach to the oppoſite vice. Hence there was a common law among the Greeks, that no whore ſhould borrow her name from any of their ſacred games. Infamy indeed ſeems to be ſo eſſential to the idea annexed to this word, that we will ſcarce allow the bittereſt repentance to wipe it off.

BUT, not to launch out too far, we ſhall confine ourſelves to the regards ſhown to this virtue by the Romans, who may be conſidered as the beſt models. We are told, (a thing hardly credible), that, for upwards of five hundred years, there was no inſtance of a divorce among that people. Nay, the ancient Romans were ſo nice in their ſentiments of chaſtity, that they regarded a woman, who entered into a ſecond marriage,

marriage, in an unfavourable light; and were in uſe to honour, with a crown of chaſtity, the matrons who refuſed to do ſo, as Valerius Maximus informs us.

UPON chaſtity they ſeem to have reſted the perpetuity of their ſtate; and the preſervation of the ſacred fire, upon which the fate of their ſtate was thought to depend, they truſted to the particular care of a certain number of ſpotleſs virgins. Thoſe ſacred veſtals enjoyed diſtinguiſhed privileges. But, if they forfeited their virtue, 'tis well known with what ſeverity the crime was expiated.

CHASTITY makes a great figure in the Roman hiſtory, and gave occaſion to the moſt remarkable revolutions of that ſtate. The Romans ſubmitted, with incredible patience, to the tyrannical government of the Tarquins. But a ſenſe of violated chaſtity rouſed, all at once, that ſpirit, which a thouſand other acts of oppreſſion could not awake. And the vengeance, provoked by the diſhonour done to Lucretia, laid the foundation of the greateſt commonwealth on earth.

THE Romans again fell under oppreſſion, and the cruelty of the Decemvirs became unſupportable to the people; but all their ſufferings could not force them upon the means of redreſs. It was an attempt upon the honour of a young Plebeian-

maid which alone could effect this, and reſtore liberty to Rome. Had this been a common wrong, Appius might have accompliſhed it as he did a thouſand others. But it muſt appear an injury deeply accented, and directed againſt the moſt quick and ſenſible part of nature, which could make a fond father plunge his dagger in the boſome of his beloved, his innocent and lovely child; and could make all Rome take part in a quarrel which their own grievances, their own utility, could not engage them in.

SUCH a powerful energy has chaſtity upon the human heart: and ſure this was not peculiar to the Romans, but is natural to all mankind. Every father, every brother, will find the like reſentments riſe in his breaſt from ſuch wrongs; and few injuries are more cruelly revenged. Nay, we ſhall find, that paſſion, intereſt and honour, are not able to pervert thoſe natural ſentiments. The diſſolute themſelves are forced to give teſtimony to the native excellence of chaſtity. It does not ſurpriſe us, if a ſevere Juvenal laſhes, with the utmoſt indignation, the unchaſte manners of the age; and treats even vice itſelf perhaps with too little delicacy. But we ſhall find men of pleaſure, even a Salluſt and a Horace, do the ſame thing. The former was notoriouſly diſſolute in his manners, and yet there is no one makes juſter reflexions upon the low account to

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be made of corporeal pleaſures, or more magnifies the ſuperior ſatisfactions of the mind. Horace was a ſlave to an irregular paſſion; and yet, in his ſober hours, he gives a feeling deſcription of the bad effects of that paſſion; which, ſays he, firſt diſorders and pollutes private families; and thence ſpreads its baneful contagion through the whole people. He ſeverely animadverts upon the corruptions of his own age, and makes a juſt encomium upon the chaſte and ſober manners of the antient Romans, by which they were formed for the nobleſt atchievements: of this we have a remarkable proof in the ſixth ode of his third book.

By this time, it muſt appear evident, that chaſtity is a virtue ſtrongly founded in the human conſtitution. 'Tis true, the one ſex has ſome pretence to inſiſt upon a leſſer obligation to this virtue. But then, if the other could be perſuaded univerſally to preſerve it inviolate, the privilege ours might boaſt of, would reſolve into an empty name.

HITHERTO we have conſidered chaſtity in general, without any relation to the marriage-vow: but, as our author would endeavour to deſtroy it, even in this reſpect, it may be proper to add a few obſervations more, to explode this extraordinary opinion.

MARRIAGE is certainly an original inſtitution. It is a natural bond of love and conſtant friend-

ſhip

ſhip, whereby the comforts of life are multiplied, and its cares are divided. *Nihil tam hominum eſt, quam fortuitis caſibus, mulieris maritum, uxorem viri participem eſſe*, as Ulpian elegantly expreſſes it. This union is the ſource of families, the genuine and kind nurſe of ſociety. It eſtabliſhes a natural government, the end of which is the care and education of children. Each parent has a peculiar taſk in this œconomy: and their concern muſt be, not merely to protect and ſupport the perſons of their children, but chiefly to regulate their paſſions, and form their minds in ſuch a manner as to make them uſeful and valuable members of ſociety. The whole adminiſtration is ſweetened, and rendered agreeable by conjugal and parental love; and from the due execution of it, all the ſtreams of domeſtic and ſocial happineſs flow.

THE ſmalleſt reflexion upon this faint delineation of the marriage-ſtate, muſt convince us, that fidelity to the nuptial vow, is a virtue of the utmoſt importance. Upon the obſervance of it, depends the order, ſecurity, peace, and comfort of families; from whence alſo the more extenſive bleſſings of ſociety derive their ſource. But the violation of it, in place of that friendſhip which is the greateſt bleſſing on earth, produces domeſtic broils, inteſtine diſorder, and the neglect of thoſe dear pledges who demand the

the cordial and joint aid of both parents; which neglect muſt widely diffuſe its fatal effects through human ſociety. Nay, the violation of the marriage-covenant is apt to provoke the moſt cruel jealouſy and ſevere revenge: ſo that the blood of thouſands, and the overthrow of ſtates, have not ſatiated the vengeance inflamed by this one crime. Is not, then, infidelity to the marriage bed a vice? if it is not, ſurely nothing elſe can be ſuch.

ADULTERY has indeed been juſtly conſidered as a moſt enormous crime by all mankind. The puniſhment of it antiently among the oriental nations, was ſtoning to death. This appears from the Jewiſh law; and from what Homer makes Hector ſay to his brother Paris, That, if he had got what he deſerved, he had long ago been ſtoned to death.

VARIOUS and ſevere were the puniſhments inflicted on it by the laws of the ſeveral ſtates of Greece; ſome of them ſo ſhameful and infamous as can ſcarce be mentioned with decency. When the Lepreates, ſays Ælian, detect an adulterer, they lead him bound through their city, for three ſeveral days, and account him infamous for ever thereafter. An adultreſs they oblige to ſtand at the market-place, for eleven days, having no other covering than a thin tranſparent

ſparent garment, without a girdle: and thus they make her infamy compleat.

'Tis true, at Sparta, for a long time, they had no law againſt adultery: but the reaſon of this we learn from the following paſſage of Plutarch: "Geraclus, ſays he, a primitive Spar-"tan, being aſked by a ſtranger, what puniſh-"ment their law had appointed for adulte-"rers? replied, there were no adulterers in "his country: But returned the ſtranger, ſup-"poſe there were one, and the crime were pro-"ved againſt him, how would you puniſh him? "He anſwered, that the offender muſt pay to "the plaintiff a bull, with the neck ſo long, as "that he might reach over the mountain Tay-"getus, and drink of the river Eurotas, that "runs on the other ſide. The man, ſurpriſed "at this, ſaid, why? 'tis impoſſible to find ſuch "a bull. Geraclus, ſmillingly replied, 'tis juſt "as poſſible to find an adulterer at Sparta."

The caſe ſeems to have been the ſame with the Romans; for a long time adultery was ſcarce known among them. 'Tis true, when luxury had unſtrung all their priſtine virtue, and introduced a total diſſolution of manners, adultery became a very fathionable and polite vice. It was not, however, the leſs pernicious; for, as Livy obſerves of the Romans of his time, their

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vices were become an unſupportable burden to themſelves; and yet, at the ſame time, they could not ſubmit to their proper remedies.

AUGUSTUS CESAR, a prince of great prudence, thought it neceſſary to make the reformation of manners an object of his principal attention. He made many wiſe laws to reſtore the credit of chaſtity, and diſcourage the contrary vice. Baniſhment was the pain he inflicted upon adultery; which, in after-times, was made a capital crime. To Auguſtus's wiſe regulations, Horace alludes in the following verſes:

Nullis polluitur caſta domus ſtupris;
Mos et lex, maculoſum edomuit nefas.
Laudantur ſimili prole puerperæ,
Culpam pœna premit comes.

CICERO places adultery amongſt thoſe atrocious crimes, whoſe natural and manifeſt turpitude, no conſent or authority could remove. Nay, the crime of adultery appeared ſo odious aud unnatural, that the Roman law indulged private vengeance to the father in certain circumſtances, and ſometimes to the huſband.

WE ſhall only add, that Virgil, allowed to be the moſt judicious of all poets, tho' he wrote in a very profligate age, and to a court as corrupted, as it was polite, has yet the courage to place the perſons guilty of the violation of the marriage-

riage bed, in the catalogue of thoſe atrocious criminals, whom he mentions in his ſixth book, as condemned to the ſevereſt puniſhments in the diſmal manſions, which he there deſcribes; and he makes this obſervation upon them all:

Auſi omnes immane nefas.

THESE curſory obſervations appear more than ſufficient to refute the infamous maxim of La Fontaine quoted by our Author, That "female "infidelity, or adultery, if known, is a ſmall "matter; if not known, is nothing at all." A maxim which can only be built upon ſuch diſſolute principles as will equally juſtify every thing, the moſt obſcene, the moſt unnatural and ſhocking that can be imagined.

WE ſhall conclude this ſubject, by quoting a paſſage from a late celebrated writer of morality; where the reflexions will appear to be juſt and natural, and to carry their own evidence along with them.

"THERE is no enjoyment of external plea-"ſure, ſays Mr Hutchinſon, which has more im-"poſed upon men of late, by ſome confuſed "ſpecies of morality, than gallantry. The ſen-"ſible pleaſures alone muſt, by all men who have "the leaſt reflexion, be eſteemed at a very low "rate: but the deſires of this kind (as they

"were

" were by nature intended to found the moſt
" conſtant uninterrupted friendſhips, and to in-
" troduce the moſt venerable and lovely rela-
" tions by marriages and families) ariſe in our
" hearts, attended with ſome of the ſweeteſt af-
" fections, with a diſintereſted love and tender-
" neſs, with a moſt gentle and obliging deport-
" ment, with ſomething great and heroic in our
" temper. The wretch, who riſes no higher in
" this paſſion, than the mean ſenſual gratifica-
" tion, is abhorred by every one. But thoſe
" ſublimer ſenſations and paſſions do often ſo fill
" the imaginations of the amorous, that they are
" unawares led into the moſt contemptible and
" cruel conduct which can be imagined. When,
" for ſome trifling tranſitory ſenſations, which
" they might have innocently enjoyed, along
" with the higheſt moral pleaſures in marriage,
" they expoſe the very perſon they love and
" admire to the deepeſt infamy and ſorrow, to
" the contempt of the world, to perpetual con-
" fuſion, remorſe and anguiſh; or, to what is
" worſe, an inſenſibility of all honour and
" ſhame, virtue or vice, good or evil; to be the
" ſcorn and averſion of the world: and all this,
" coloured over with the gay notions of plea-
" ſantry, gentileneſs, politeneſs, courage, high
" enjoyment of life.

" WOULD

"WOULD men allow themſelves a little time "to reflect on the whole effect of ſuch capri- "cious purſuits, the anguiſh and diſtraction of "mind which theſe ſallies of pleaſure give to "huſbands, fathers, brothers; would they con- "ſider how they themſelves would reſent ſuch "treatment of a wife, a child, a ſiſter; how "much deeper ſuch diſtreſſes are than thoſe tri- "fling loſſes or damages, for which we think it "juſt to bring the authors of them to the gal- "lows; ſure, none but a thorough villain could "either practiſe, or approve, the one more than "the other.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Reflexions upon Mr HUME's *ſcheme in general.*

WHEN we conſider with any degree of attention the preſent imperfection of the human mind, and the diſorder which manifeſtly prevails in the paſſions: when we further reflect upon the complex and extenſive nature of virtue, which regulates our conduct in the various relations we ſtand in to other beings, in the competitions of ſuch relations, and the numberleſs accidents that may change and vary their poſition: when we join together all theſe circumſtances, 'tis no wonder if we are often at a loſs to know our proper duty; and if, in many caſes, the diſtinctions betwixt right and wrong appear very imperceptible.

IT ſeems to have been from reflexions of this kind, that Plato, in his 2d Alcibiades, affirms, that we ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of ſome ſuperior being, to remove the miſt that obſcures our mind, and to furniſh us with the proper means to diſtinguiſh between good and evil, and teach

teach us how to act in a right manner, both with regard to God and man.

THO' theſe difficulties muſt, no doubt, be acknowledged, yet we have already ſhown, that the great lines of duty are, for the moſt part, clearly diſcoverable, if we will be at any reaſonable pains to inveſtigate them. And, where the difference betwixt right and wrong is rendered obſcure, either by their near approach to the common boundary of both, or from ſome other peculiar and complicated circumſtances; yet, in ſuch caſes, an honeſt intention will, in a good meaſure, excuſe a miſtake in judgment, and, for the moſt part, prevent any palpable bad conſequences of ſuch miſtake.

OUR Author's profeſſed deſign appears to be, to clear up the principles of morals, and place them in ſuch a new and ſtrong point of light, as to render it more eaſy in particular caſes, to diſcover the real difference betwixt right and wrong, and thereby to promote and facilitate the univerſal practice of virtue. But when the manner in which he has executed this laudable deſign, is conſidered, we muſt be under a ſtrong temptation to think, that he has on the contrary exerted all the force of his genius, applied the whole edge of that ſubtilty and acuteneſs, in which he excells, to extenuate, and render

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as imperceptible as poſſible, the difference betwixt virtue and vice, nay, to confound both in one undiſtinguiſhable chaos.

'TIS however equitable to preſume, that the too great refinement and ſubtilty of his ideas, have carried him unwittingly not a little out of a juſt ſituation, whereby he muſt have obſerved the ſeveral objects of moral truth in an undue light, and at improper diſtances, and been thereby miſled into wrong concluſions.

How far the obſervation juſt now made upon the Author's execution of his projected purpoſe, is juſt, may partly appear from what has already been ſaid, and will ſtill be diſcovered in a ſtronger light, when we ſhall continue to follow him through ſome further particulars of his plan.

BEFORE we proceed to take notice of the Author's peculiar notion of virtue, it may be of uſe to obſerve in general, that into whatever principle we reſolve virtue, that principle will appear ſtronger or weaker, according to the nature of the object to which it is applied, as it may likewiſe, in itſelf, admit of very different degrees of ſtrength: for example, ſhould we reſolve virtue into the ſole principle of benevolence, that principle in its own nature may be either weaker or ſtronger, or, in its exerciſe, may admit of various degrees of ſtrength, according to the dif-

rent nature of the objects which excite its influences. It muſt be a neceſſary conſequence of this obſervation, that, in many caſes, virtue or vice may approach ſo near the common boundary, that it may be difficult to diſtinguiſh them. And tho' we ſhould diſtinguiſh them, the one will not appear to have great beauty, nor the other great deformity. But if from this we ſhould proceed to infer, that there is no eſſential difference betwixt virtue and vice, ſuch inference would be equally falſe and dangerous. The truth of this laſt propoſition will perhaps be beſt illuſtrated by the conſideration of ſimilar caſes. Light and darkneſs, pleaſure and pain, happineſs and miſery, may ſeverally be ſuppoſed to approach ſo near one another, as that it may be very difficult to diſtinguiſh them, and the real difference will be very inconſiderable. 'Tis however evident, that this can never be a reaſon for confounding thoſe things, ſo manifeſtly different and oppoſite in their natures. The caſe muſt be the ſame with regard to virtue; it ſtands in equal oppoſition to vice, how near ſoever it may approach unto it in particular caſes.

THERE is one piece of ſophiſtry that appears to run thro' the whole of our Author's reaſoning; that when he aſſumes what he ſuppoſes to be the proper principle of virtue, he illuſtrates this, by condeſcending on thoſe qualities which

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he accounts virtuous, and inſenſibly carries the mind from qualities truly noble and excellent, till it is led, by many intermediate ſteps, to qualities whoſe value is ſcarcely at all perceivable; and whilſt he reſolves them all into a ſentiment of the ſame kind, we are apt to confound them, and are in danger of eſtimating at an equal rate, things in their nature extremely different; at leaſt this is a danger which we are not ſufficiently guarded againſt.

BUT this is not the moſt eſſential error which our Author has fallen into; he has miſunderſtood the proper nature of virtue, and, proceeding upon a fundamental miſtake, has been led into a thouſand abſurdities. His notion of virtue is, that it is the poſſeſſion of ſuch qualities as are uſeful or agreeable to ourſelves or others. The nature, the merit of virtue, he places in its utility, as he reſolves that into a common ſentiment of humanity; humanity, I mean, in the obſerver; for moſt of thoſe qualities placed by him among the virtues, are very different from humanity, and even many of them, as will by and by appear, do not ſo much as belong to the ſoul. That virtue is recommended chiefly by its utility, we muſt with our Author agree. But it is neceſſary to add further, that the utility of virtue is of a peculiar kind; it has ſomething in its nature that gives it a ſuperior excellence,

and eſſentially diſtinguiſhes it from the common idea of utility.

THO' we were not able to point out this quality of virtue, from which its peculiar excellence ariſes; yet the general conſent of mankind, even of the vicious in their ſober hours, muſt be a ſufficient proof that ſuch a quality is real, becauſe ſuch conſent muſt be founded upon ſome natural ſentiment which the idea of virtue immediately touches. But there appears no difficulty to point out this property of virtue, which is the ſource of its peculiar beauty and excellence. We have already ſhown, that an intention to do good, is eſſentially included in the notion of virtue. This intention is founded in original ſentiment and affection, and capable of the greateſt improvement by means of proper reaſoning and reflexion, and of being thereby rendered a ſtrong and habitual principle of action.

LET us then ſuppoſe a man of this character, one who has an habitual inclination and intention to do good, and even to ſubject his own private gratifications to the more general good of others, who has been at pains to render this diſpoſition a firm and uniform principle of conduct. How lovely is ſuch a character, what a benign aſpect does it bear to ſociety? It is an original, active and natural ſource of bleſſings,

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which are thence derived to mankind in bounteous and delightful ſtreams.

WHAT is our Author's man of virtue in compariſon of ſuch a character? He may be wiſe, learned, brave, witty, chearful, handſome, cleanly, rich, and great. He may poſſeſs all theſe qualities, and a thouſand more of the ſame kind, and yet be without virtue. For let us ſuppoſe, that he has no habitual purpoſe or intention to do good to others, but that his own ſenſual and ſelfiſh gratification is the ſole ſtudy and care of his life: in what a mean and inglorious light muſt he appear? At beſt he can be conſidered but as an uſeleſs and unworthy member of ſociety. But let us further ſuppoſe, that he has an habitual inclination to do ill, and takes delight in miſchief, or, which is not much better, that he prefers the leaſt ſelfiſh pleaſure to any greater degree of public good, in this caſe he muſt be regarded as the greateſt nuſance and peſt of ſociety, and the more dangerous, the greater his qualities and abilities are; and mankind will find it their intereſt, and the beſt juſtice they can do to themſelves, to get rid of him as ſoon as they can.

ALL thoſe qualities, accounted virtuous by our Author in reſpect of their utility, are indeed uſeful: but in what ſenſe? In this only, that

they are capable of being put to a good uſe; but they may be alſo put to a bad one.

Now what is it that determines betwixt theſe different and contrary effects, and gives the preference to the firſt? 'Tis virtue, or the virtuous diſpoſition above noticed.

Tis virtue then that claims the whole praiſe of the utility of thoſe qualities, and not the qualities themſelves.

Let us ſuppoſe a ſhip well built, her rudder, maſts, rigging and ſails juſtly proportioned; all theſe are uſeful, and render her fit for navigation. But their utility is plainly relative to the ſkill of the maſter or pilot, without which it would ſignify nothing at all: and when he has happily performed a long and difficult voyage, the praiſe of it properly belongs to him: and the commendations we beſtow upon the make of the ſhip itſelf, are plainly relative, and imply its fitneſs to ſerve the purpoſes of a proper navigator. The parallel is ſo plain and obvious, that it ſtands in need of no illuſtration.

From what has been ſaid in general, our Author's whole ſcheme ſeems to be ſufficiently ſubverted. But, to ſet this matter ſtill in a clearer light, it may be proper to condeſcend upon ſome of the particular virtues, of which he has given

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a very large catalogue. And 'tis hoped, a few inſtances may ſuffice for our preſent purpoſe; for it would be endleſs to run over them all.

HE indeed crouds into his aſſemblage of virtues, every enduement of the mind, every quality of the body, and every external ornament, and advantage of fortune.

WITH regard to the firſt, which ſeem to have the faireſt claim to the title of virtue, we ſhall ſingle out a few of them, as ſufficient for the illuſtration of our argument. And let theſe be genius, courage, prudence, and induſtry; for with regard to benevolence, we have already particularly conſidered the nature of that affection.

IT is to be obſerved, in the firſt place, that virtue ſuppoſes the reality and exiſtence of thoſe, and other ſuch mental qualities, in ſome proper degree: for virtue is no other than the right application of ſuch qualities, and exerting them in ſuch manner as to attain the good end propoſed. If a man is therefore entirely deſtitute of them, he can have no character at all, and muſt certainly be regarded in a very mean and contemptible light.

BUT then, when we ſuppoſe the reality of theſe qualities, they do not immediately become virtues.

virtues. A wicked and malicious nature may be ſuppoſed poſſeſſed of them all. He may have great knowledge and capacity to deviſe ill, great prudence, or cunning rather, in diſcovering the means of accompliſhing it, and abundance of induſtry and reſolution in the uſe and application of thoſe means. And this is the very idea that we form of the devil himſelf: nay, we may ſuppoſe, that a perſon poſſeſſed of the above qualities, may make a right application of them, and yet not deſerve the title of virtuous. For, if he is deſtitute of the good intention mentioned, if he acts from corrupt and ſelfiſh views, 'tis plain he does good by accident, not by choice: his character cannot be depended upon, and whilſt we have the principle of his conduct diſtinctly in view, it is impoſſible we can pronounce him virtuous. Theſe things are ſo clear, that our conviction is a neceſſary effect of the ſmalleſt attention; they ſo invariably tally with the natural ſentiments of man, that they muſt inſtantly produce an univerſal aſſent.

To be remarkably deficient in any of the above qualities, muſt give pain, for the reaſon already mentioned; but, induſtriouſly to miſapply them, participates more of the poſitive nature of vice, and expoſes to juſter odium.

WISDOM is indeed an illuſtrious quality; but then it derives all its luſtre from the goodneſs of the end to which it is applied, or is at leaſt ſuppoſed to be applicable.

FOLLY, if conſidered as a total deprivation of wiſdom, is the object of our pity, or at moſt of our contempt. Thus we may pity or deſpiſe an idiot, but would think it cruel to hurt him; whereas a villain, as ſuch, we alſo hate, and would think it juſt to puniſh him. If we conſider folly as oppoſite to prudence, it participates of a moral nature; and a perſon who neglects the proper means which he might have uſed, we may not only deſpiſe, but think worthy of blame and puniſhment, tho' in a leſſer degree, than one of a direct bad intention.

IT is very poſſible, that a man may own, nay, even boaſt, of a bad action; and yet take it ill to be called a fool. But, however ſelf-love may influence the opinion we form of our own conduct, it will not regulate the ſentiments of others. The reſt of mankind will put a real criminal to death, at the ſame time that they defend a fool from any injury attempted to be done him as ſuch.

COURAGE, as well as prudence, is of a mixed nature; it ſignifies that fortitude and firmneſs of mind which ariſes from the natural ſtrength of conſtitution: It alſo ſignifies that reſolution with

with which we are inſpired by the conſideration of the goodneſs of an end. And it will readily be allowed, that a man may poſſeſs a greater degree of the firſt kind of courage than another; and yet, on many occaſions, be inferior to him with regard to the laſt. Cowardice muſt therefore fall under the ſame view, and be either an object of contempt, or blame. And, as we cannot certainly penetrate into the motives of men's actions, we commonly conjoin both ſentiments, and conſider cowardice as a vice.

'Tis needleſs to purſue the argument into further particulars. The caſe plainly appears to be this: the mental qualities are neceſſary to the operations of virtue; and the more conſiderable theſe are, this laſt may be rendered the more illuſtrious; but then it is to be remarked on the other hand, that vice may alſo be the more aggravated. Our Author's capital miſtake, therefore, is, the confounding theſe qualities themſelves, with the proper uſe we make of them. And the miſtake ſeems plainly to ariſe from the praiſe we commonly beſtow upon the qualities themſelves, abſtractly conſidered. But then 'tis evident, that, when theſe qualities are applied to real life, this praiſe muſt relate to the right uſe we make, or may be ſuppoſed to make of them; for nothing is more certain than this, that if we make a bad uſe of thoſe qualities, they

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are denominated vicious. Now, how can the ſame qualities be both virtuous and vicious, ſimply conſidered in themſelves? Theſe epithets muſt certainly ariſe from the different relations they ſtand in to ſomething elſe. Our Author, then, falls into a groſs miſtake, in ſuppoſing, that the great abilities of Agathocles tended to his praiſe and honour; when, at the ſame time, he employed all thoſe abilities in the cruel exerciſe of tyranny and oppreſſion. A perſon of ſmall endueiments is not capable of any great degree either of virtue or vice. But one poſſeſſed of great abilities, is capable of a high degree of either, according as he uſes them.

WE are not always critical and exact in our language or thoughts, and ſo we may ſometimes commend a quality in a man, though miſapplied, and therefore bad, by having a tacit reference to a right uſe that might be made of ſuch quality. But, in philoſophical inquiries, thoſe inaccuracies may be very dangerous; eſpecially where principles are built upon them.

OUR Author would endeavour to ſupport his theory, from the authority of the Antients. But the praiſes which theſe beſtow upon the qualities of the mind are plainly to be accounted for in the manner we have done.

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If we conſider Cicero's cardinal virtues, juſtice will be allowed properly to be one; and ſo muſt temperance too, originally indeed a private virtue, but having alſo a neceſſary influence upon the ſocial ones. We have ſhown, that prudence and fortitude are of a mixed nature; but, if we conſider them as ſimple mental qualities, they are ſo immediately uſeful in the exerciſe of virtue, that they may receive that denomination without great impropriety. It is, however, to be remembered, that, if they are miſapplied, they will juſtly be accounted vicious.

Cicero borrows his diſtribution of the virtues from Panetius the Stoic. Juvenal was of the ſame ſect. In his tenth ſatire, (the fineſt perhaps that ever was wrote), he expoſes, with great ſpirit and juſtneſs of thought, the vanity of power, eloquence and ambition, fortitude and military glory, and other things which men are apt to ſet a high value upon, when he conſiders them as not under the influence of virtue.

The antients, to be ſure, cannot be of any avail to our Author, as their notions of virtue were diametrically oppoſite to his. But it is needleſs to uſe any other authority to refute our Author, than his own. Having embraced a falſe and unnatural hypotheſis, it was not to be expected he could be conſiſtent with himſelf. Accordingly

ingly he has here contradicted in ſtrong and direct terms, all the theory which he has here been eſtabliſhing with ſo much care. In p. 23. he expreſſes himſelf in the following manner; "Exalted capacity, undaunted courage, proſpe-"rous ſucceſs; theſe may only expoſe a hero or "politician to the envy and malignity of the pu-"blic. But, as ſoon as the praiſes are added "of humane and beneficent; when inſtances "are diſplayed of lenity, tenderneſs and friend-"ſhip, envy itſelf is ſilent, or joins the general "voice of applauſe and acclamation." Thus he plainly inſinuates, that the nobleſt qualities of the mind, even when attended with ſucceſs, yet, if they are not influenced by virtue or right intention, may rather excite envy, than gain applauſe: and we may add, as a neceſſary conſequence, that, if theſe qualities are governed by a direct bad intention, and employed to diſtreſs mankind, they muſt excite hatred and averſion too. 'Tis goodneſs, 'tis right intention alone, that infuſes that charm which ſo much captivates and delights. This entirly coincides with the ſcheme we have laid down; but is totally ſubverſive of that of our Author.

IT may not be improper to illuſtrate the preceeding argument by a remarkable example, whereby the difference betwixt the moral virtues, and thoſe other qualities and things mentioned

by our Author, may appear in the ſtrongeſt point of light.

WHEN the Duke de Sully, in 1603, ſet out on an embaſſage for the court of England, he was attended by a numerous retinue of the principal gentlemen in France: amongſt the reſt Mr Servin preſented his young ſon to him; at the ſame time, earneſtly begging the Duke, that he would uſe his beſt endeavours to make him an honeſt man. This requeſt gave Sully a great curioſity to ſearch into his character. And he gives the following account of him, which we ſhall not abridge.

"HIS genius, ſays he, was ſo lively, that no-
"thing could eſcape his penetration; his appre-
"henſion was ſo quick, that he underſtood every
"thing in an inſtant, and his memory ſo prodi-
"gious, that he never forgot any thing. He
"was maſter of all the branches of philoſophy,
"the mathematicks; particularly fortification
"and deſigning. Nay, he was ſo thoroughly
"acquainted with divinity, that he was an ex-
"cellent preacher, when he pleaſed, and could
"manage the controverſy for or againſt the
"Proteſtant religion with the greateſt ability.
"He not only underſtood the Greek, Hebrew,
"and other learned languages, but all the jar-
"gons of the moderns. He entered ſo exactly

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"into their accent and pronunciation, to which "he joined ſuch a perfect imitation of their air "and manners, that not only the people of the "different nations in Europe, but of the ſeveral "provinces of France, would have taken him "for a native of the country. He applied this "talent to imitate all ſorts of perſons, which he "performed with wonderful dexterity; and was "accordingly the beſt comedian in the world. "He was a good poet, an excellent muſician, "and ſung with equal art and ſweetneſs. He "ſaid maſs; for he would do every thing, as "well as know every thing. His body was per-"fectly proportioned to his mind. He was well "made, vigorous and agile, formed for all "ſorts of exerciſes. He rode a horſe well, and "was admired for dancing, leaping, and wreſt-"ling. He was acquainted with all kinds of "ſports and diverſions, and could practiſe in moſt "of the mechanical arts. Reverſe the medal, "ſays Sully: He was a liar, falſe, treacherous, "cruel, and cowardly, a ſharper, drunkard and "glutton. He was a gameſter, an abandoned "debauchee, a blaſphemer and Atheiſt. In a "word, he was poſſeſſed of every vice, contra-"ry to nature, to honour, to religion, and ſo-"ciety: he perſiſted in his vices to the laſt, "and fell a ſacrifice to his debaucheries, in the "flower of his age; he died in a public ſtew,

" holding the glaſs in his hand, ſwearing and " denying God."

It is needleſs to make any reflexions upon this character, it muſt appear ſo thoroughly vicious; and the more dangerous from all thoſe extraordinary qualities both of mind and body which accompanied it, even the unhappy father pronounced it ſo in a ſon. And the Duke de Sully obſerves, that he was at once a miracle and a monſter: It is therefore certain beyond the leaſt ſhadow of doubt, that virtue does not conſiſt in the poſſeſſion of the greateſt perſonal or external advantages, but in the right uſe and application of theſe, from a conſtant and pure intention. It is this only which properly excites the moral ſentiment of eſteem and approbation. Nor can the moſt ſhining abilities which the human nature is ſuſceptible of, avert that infamy and contempt which is the natural portion of vice.

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon ſhin'd;
The wiſeſt, brighteſt, meaneſt, of mankind.

There appears no occaſion to uſe any farther direct arguments to undermine this chimerical fabric of virtue which we have been conſidering: the abſurd conſequences which it leads to, muſt equally expoſe its weakneſs. We ſhall mention but a few of them. The notion of

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uſeful and agreeable, adopted by our Author, leads him to rank among the moral virtues not only the qualities of the mind, but the properties of the body, beauty, ſtrength, and juſt proportion: nay, even external things, dreſs, riches, and indeed, by a neceſſary conſequence, pleaſures of every kind. It would appear too ſerious to diſpute the titles of theſe newly initiated virtues; but it may be worth while to remark, that, where our Author introduces cleanlineſs into their number, p. 169. he makes the following extraordinary obſervation. "We "may, ſays he, in this inſtance, (referring to "cleanlineſs), ſeemingly ſo trivial, clearly diſ-"cover the origin of moral diſtinctions, about "which the learned have involved themſelves "in ſuch mazes of perplexity and error."

IT would ſeem indeed to require a great degree of ſharpſightedneſs to diſcover what new light has been thrown upon the ſubject, by this extraordinary obſervation. Cleanlineſs is a quality which relates to external appearance, and in this reſpect, the flowers of the field excel all that human art and induſtry can accompliſh. A perſon deſtitute of every principle of piety, juſtice, or humanity, and even totally abandoned to all manner of vice, may yet poſſeſs this quality in the higheſt degree, and that very conſiſtently with his character: We will certainly diſ-

cover more of it in the insolence of a Roman triumph, than in the unambitious exercise of the most extensive goodness.

It is therefore much to be feared, that the learned and unlearned too, will continue in their former errors, with regard to the moral distinctions, notwithstanding this very ingenious elucidation of our Author.

There is another virtue which 'tis not easy to overlook, the quality of a good woman's man, according to the gross description our Author gives of it, in his note, p. 135. Decency will not allow us to view it in a full attitude. But, surely, this entire novice must have blushed at its first introduction into the moral assembly, had not modesty, at least as an attendant upon chastity, been previously dismissed. 'Twas well it was so, otherwise their meeting might have disturbed the harmony of the virtue.

This virtue he represents as not so universal as other virtues; because it respects only the female sex. Perhaps, as he had deprived that sex of chastity, a virtue which they had been in possession of as far back as the memory and records of mankind can carry us, he thought it just, in place of it, to furnish them with this other virtue, which stands in a remarkable opposition to it. Whether he has made that sex

a ſufficient recompenſe, it is needleſs to determine: but this is certain, that he has paved the way to enrich mankind with the poſſeſſion of a thouſand virtues that were never once dreamt of before. For every miniſter of pleaſure, even of the loweſt kind, may put in his claim for virtue, and riſe in his demands in proportion as he can increaſe our ſenſual gratifications. Strange morality indeed! But it is not confined to thoſe functions common to us with the brutes; it even extends itſelf to inanimate things; ſo that the beauty of a flower, and the uſeful qualities of a plant, may aſſume the name of moral virtue. This conſequence, our Author indeed, p. 74. 75. expreſsly denies; but it will baffle all his ſubtilty to avoid it.

HIS notion of virtue is founded upon the ſentiment of utility; but he obſerves, that, when man is the object of this ſentiment, it is mixed with affection, eſteem, and approbation. This he is ſenſible, however, is not ſufficient for a proper diſtinction; becauſe he allows, that we have a ſpecies of approbation attending even inanimate objects, he would therefore found the difference in the degree of approbation; it is different, ſays he, from what is directed to beneficent magiſtrates or ſtateſmen. This is indeed true; becauſe to act up to the character of a good magiſtrate implies a right intention, which,

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as has been obſerved, is a proper characteriſtic of virtue. But let us compare our liking and approbation of plants or flowers to the like ſentiment directed to cleanlineſs and the other virtue laſt mentioned, and if there be any difference, it muſt be to the advantage of thoſe inanimate objects. Thus we are left to eſtimate the quantity of moral beauty and virtue which a fine flower or uſeful plant may be poſſeſſed of.

One might have thought, that, as our Author lays ſuch ſtreſs upon ſentiment, in ſearching into the principle of morality, ſome of his concluſions at leaſt, ſo much offending natural ſentiment, might have raiſed a ſuſpicion, that there was either ſome error in his principles, or that they were placed in a wrong light, and ſeen with a partial regard; and thereby have occaſioned ſome review or rectification of them. But the caſe is quite otherwiſe; he appears fond of his imaginary diſcoveries, and unites his ſeveral concluſions into a ſhort deſcription of virtue.

"Virtue, ſays he, p. 171. conſiſts in the "poſſeſſion of qualities uſeful or agreeable to the "perſon himſelf, or to others." He ſeems here to value himſelf as the only perſon who, after ſo many ages ſpent in fruitleſs reſearch, has at laſt diſcovered the true nature of virtue. I would willingly join him in this ſelf-congratulation,

and

and give him no disturbance in the enjoyment of his opinion, even whilst I thought it a dream; but the importance of truth will not permit this in the present case.

CICERO tells us, that there is nothing really useful or agreeable, but what is honest and virtuous; but our Author has so fully explained himself, as to leave no room for equivocation. His definition of virtue will therefore appear plainly to be *felo de se*, and sufficient in itself to expose the weakness and absurdity of his whole scheme. He draws together four principles different from, and often opposite to, one another; but points out no bond of union to establish a proper harmony among them, and to secure a regular train of effects.

HIS principles are, the qualities of useful and agreeable, and each of these diversified according to the different objects to which they are directed, ourselves or others. With respect to the qualities themselves, he has not sufficiently ascertained their nature and extent: for example, with regard to the agreeable, he does not distinguish betwixt the moral sense, and the external senses, or perceptions of imagination, but he applies that quality to every sensible pleasure we are susceptible of. Further, he has laid down no certain rule to determine the preference in a competition betwixt the useful and agreeable; he

he has left that entirely to taſte and ſentiment, which muſt operate irregularly, and vary its influence according to the mood and humour we happen to be in at the time. Both theſe obſervations may be illuſtrated from an inſtance which he himſelf has condeſcended on. He has plainly inſinuated, as has been already obſerved, that adultery, by becoming agreeable; to what? to our external ſenſe or imagination, to be ſure! is, upon that very account, rendered a virtue: Nay, that the agreeableneſs of that virtue, if I muſt call it ſo, may be ſo prevailing as to take place of juſtice and chaſtity, to both which it is oppoſite, although theſe are founded upon his other principle of utility. The very mention of theſe things abundantly diſcovers the extravagance and inconſiſtency of our Author's principles.

But this will appear ſtill in a ſtronger light, when we conſider the different objects to which thoſe ſeveral qualities are directed, ourſelves, and others. Which of theſe muſt we prefer? if we prefer ourſelves, upon all occaſions, ſure we can never be deemed virtuous; if we prefer others, we at leaſt neglect that character of virtue which recommends what is uſeful and agreeable to ourſelves. But why ſhould we prefer others? from a common ſentiment of humanity? ſuch ſentiment, however, does not exclude ourſelves. But, be that as it will, why ſhould a ſentiment

of

of humanity make us prefer others to ourſelves? Such general ſentiment is not near ſo ſtrong, by our Author's own admiſſion, as thoſe particular paſſions which direct to different objects as the ſources of our moſt ſenſible pleaſure. But it may be ſaid, that, if we were ſo conſtituted, as that the principle of humanity was the ſource of our higheſt ſatisfaction, ſuch conſtitution, as we are ſocial creatures, would undoubtedly contribute to the greateſt perfection of our happineſs; and therefore, in our calm reflexions, this is what we muſt naturally wiſh and deſire.

THIS indeed is true; but it is as certain, that ſuch conſtitution is far from agreeing to the prevailing character of mankind. Where, then, ſhall we find proper countermotives to ſubdue the force of the ſelfiſh paſſions, and give an habitual aſcendant to the ſocial ones. Our Author's ſcheme furniſhes us with none; it points out no general ſentiment ariſing from the beauty and order of the conſtitution, or from the happy effect reſulting to virtue in the final iſſue of things, which might be of force ſufficient to accompliſh this great object of morality, *viz.* to ſubject the ſelfiſh paſſions to the general good; on the contrary, he talks of the moral differences as taking but a ſlender hold of the heart. "Theſe moral "differences, ſays he, p. 100. have a conſider-"able influence, and being ſufficient at leaſt for

"diſcourſe

" diſcourſe, ſerve all our purpoſes in company, in " the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the ſchools." Thus virtue is repreſented as a ſubject of mere talk and declamation, but of very little force to influence the heart and life. That province is reſigned to the paſſions, which muſt therefore rule without controul. In which caſe, the ſentiment of humanity which directs to the good of others, muſt give way to thoſe ſtronger paſſions which engage in quite different purſuits. Thus that part of the deſcription of virtue which relates to the good of others, is rendered ineffectual, when private intereſt competes with it ; whereby the very eſſence of morality is deſtroyed.

FROM theſe few obſervations made upon the foregoing ſpecious deſcription of virtue, it will appear, that, when examined to the bottom, it really contains repugnant principles; and that immediate ſelf-love alone can decide the difference. Our Author's ſcheme of Morality is, in effect, no other than the antient ſcheme which excluded religion, which Epicurus firſt reduced to ſome form, and clothed with a tollerably decent dreſs ; he referred all to ſelf love and immediate enjoyment; but he excluded the groſſer pleaſures of ſenſe, and introduced the virtues as ſubordinate miniſters to the happineſs he propoſed. Ariſtippus was bolder than he, and gave a full indulgence to all ſenſual grati fications, which was indeed

indeed more natural and agreeable to their common principles. The Cyreniac philoſophy, therefore, in fact, prevailed, though the name of Epicurus was, perhaps, for greater decency more generally retained.

WE have ſeen how much our Author has enlarged the ſphere of the virtues, and admitted almoſt every thing into their number; but he has excluded other qualities which had a much better title. We have already conſidered juſtice and chaſtity, and we ſhall now take ſome little notice of ſelf-denial and humility. Theſe qualities, in p. 174. he has baniſhed to the monaſteries with abundance of ſcorn and ſevere invective. But happy would the Monks be, if they gave them a good reception; for they are the largeſt ſources of virtue, and the moſt ſhining ornaments of the men of the world.

IT is the province of ſelf denial to ſubdue the private affections; it is a noble virtue that ſtands oppoſite to all the ſelfiſh paſſions at once. It endeavours to moderate their violence, to check their indulgence, and, by a ſteady diſcipline, to reduce them to a proper ſubjection: and this it does, not from humour or caprice, but in order to attain the nobleſt of all purpoſes, that is, to ſecure to the ſocial virtues the empire over the mind.

THIS repreſentation of ſelf-denial is ſufficient to prove its excellence; but we ſhall confirm it from the examples of thoſe who have made the greateſt figure in life.

WHEN Scevola put his right hand into the fire, this muſt be allowed to be an extraordinary inſtance of ſelf-denial; yet this is an action, upon which the Roman writers think they can never beſtow too great applauſe. Seneca's indignation kindles, if one ſhould but inſinuate, that Scevola would have been happier, if, inſtead of putting his hand into the fire, he had put it into his miſtreſs's boſom.

How deliberate and determined, how heroic and illuſtrious was the conduct of Regulus! when he voluntarily expoſed himſelf to the cruelleſt ſufferings, rather than abandon juſtice, and forfeit his plighted faith. This extraordinary example of ſelf-denial has been a conſtant ſubject of panegyric; nor is there any inſtance of Roman magnanimity, which Horace, though an Epicurean, more celebrates and admires. It is obvious to perceive, how examples of this kind might be multiplied; and therefore it is unneceſſary to do this.

WE ſhall then proceed to conſider a little the virtue of humility.

THIS

THIS is indeed but a ſpecies of ſelf-denial; for as that ſtands oppoſed to all the paſſions in general, humility is peculiarly oppoſite to pride. If pride then be a vice, as it certainly is, humility muſt neceſſarily be a virtue. There is perhaps no vice in great life more hurtful to ſociety than pride. When thoſe who make the greateſt figure in the cabinet, or the field, pay a greater regard to a falſe notion of honour, than to the true intereſt of their country, this is often the occaſion of ſuch loſſes to a whole nation, as no after induſtry or expence can repair. And therefore we find, that no virtue ſets a great character in ſuch a beautiful point of light, as does humility.

WHEN the Athenians were deliberating, whether to engage in a war with the Macedonians, one of their Orators uſed all his eloquence, to perſuade them to war. Phocion was ſenſible of the danger to which this might expoſe his country, and therefore declared as warmly for peace; then, turning to the Orator, ſaid, This is my opinion, though I know, that, if we have war, I will be your maſter, and, if peace, you will be mine.

WE muſt equally love and admire the humble piety of Timoleon. By a ſeries of great and ſucceſsful operations, he had raiſed Sicily from the moſt deplorable condition to a ſtate of the greateſt tranquillity and happineſs: and, upon the calm review of all, he gave thanks to God,

ſays

ſays Plutarch, who, intending to beſtow ſuch a ſignal bleſſing upon the Sicilians, employed him as his inſtrument in ſo great a work.

AFTER the defeat of Hannibal, when the hard terms of peace, offered by the Romans, were debated in the ſenate of Carthage, they appeared ſo grievous to many of the young ſenators, that their pride of heart would not allow them to ſubmit to them. But, on this occaſion, Hannibal himſelf mortified his haughty ſpirit, wiſely preferred the intereſt of his country, and perſuaded them to agree to the terms propoſed. And perhaps this humble conduct adds greater luſtre to his character, than all his military atchievements.

WHAT did Fabius Maximus ſuffer in his reputation? What ignominy and contempt was he brought under from the imputation of indolence, timidity and cowardice: yet to all this he patiently ſubmitted, when he thought upon the danger that Rome was in, and, by neglecting his own character, he ſaved his country. And therefore he is juſtly celebrated amongſt the greateſt patriots.

Non ponebat enim rumores ante ſalutem:
Unus qui nobis cunctando reſtituit rem.

So true it is what Solomon ſays, that before honour cometh humility.

WE

WE have, by this time, pretty fully conſidered our Author's ſcheme. We have ſeen to what a low ſtandard he has reduced virtue, and how he has debaſed it by the admiſſion of the meaneſt qualities, and the excluſion of ſome of the nobleſt, whereby it muſt indeed take but a ſlender hold of the heart, and be little regarded in the life, as he himſelf ſeems plainly to admit. Indeed no body can have a poorer opinion of the inſufficiency of our Author's principles than he himſelf has; for, in the dialogue ſubjoined to his treatiſe, he contradicts his own ſcheme, weak as it is, and repreſents virtue not at all as founded upon nature, but as the caſual and uncertain effect of the capricious humours and cuſtoms of mankind.

AS we have already endeavoured to eſtabliſh in nature a ſolid foundation for virtue, we ſhall need to beſtow but a few reflexions upon ſome of the moſt material things thrown out by our Author, in proſecution of this new theory.

HE obſerves, that, in ſome countries, certain actions have been deemed virtuous or vicious, which, in other countries, have paſſed under the contrary denominations. He illuſtrates this by a detail of ſeveral particular examples; and from thence would ſeem to deduce the following concluſion, p. 237. that faſhion, vogue, cuſtom, and law, were the chief foundation of all moral determinations.

BEFORE we conſider any of his particular examples, it may be proper to make one general obſervation, which may throw light upon the ſubject under view. That, ſuppoſing virtue to be founded in nature, the means, which, when not eſſentially connected with it, may yet be uſeful for its ſupport and preſervation; ſuch means, I ſay, may be ſomewhat caſual, and dependent on the different humours and cuſtoms of mankind. For example, ſuppoſe chaſtity and modeſty founded in nature, ſome practices may be thought uſeful to ſupport them in ſome countries, which are diſregarded in others; and this difference may ariſe from the diverſity of climate, temper or education. In one country it may be deemed immodeſt in a woman, to ſhow her face in public, and, in another, not. In reality, it is ſo in neither. But, in the firſt, the imputation of immodeſty relates not ſo much to the action itſelf, as to the influence it may be ſuppoſed to have on the real forfeiture of virtue. In this view, many different cuſtoms are adopted by different nations, as uſeful to the ſame end, to the ſame virtue, in the nature of which they are perfectly agreed.

AND, tho' the cuſtoms themſelves may receive the moral denomination from the virtue to which they relate, yet this is but improper, and if, thro' any change of circumſtances, they ſhould ceaſe

ceaſe to have ſuch relation, the moral denomination is laid aſide.

THUS, if it is found uſeful to preſerve a woman's chaſtity, that ſhe ſhould veil her face in public, that cuſtom is received, and the contrary deemed immodeſt. But if further experience, from any change of circumſtances ſhall convince us, that a woman may appear in public unveiled without endangering her chaſtity; ſuch cuſtom is laid aſide, and the contrary practice is no longer deemed immodeſt. Thus, by making a proper diſtinction betwixt the end and the means, we may account for a great part of the diverſity of moral denominations in different countries, without ſuppoſing any difference in their ſentiments with regard to virtue as it really is in itſelf.

BUT further, even in thoſe caſes, where there may ſeem to be a real difference of ſentiment with regard to virtue itſelf, if the matter is carefully attended to, ſuch difference will, in a great meaſure, diſappear, or be diminiſhed. Let us conſider the famous caſe of Brutus as one of the principal conſpirators concerned in the death of Cæſar. That action, ſays our Author, was approved by the antients, particularly the Athenians, as truly noble and virtuous; and yet to us it muſt appear a barbarous aſſaſſination, aggravated by the guilt of perjury and ingratitude.

But,

But, to explain this, it is to be conſidered, that, when we paſs judgment upon a complex caſe, we are often tempted to overlook certain circumſtances, and form our opinion only upon that part of the action which more immediately ſtrikes us. Thus the Athenians might not have known, or at leaſt overlooked the forementioned aggravating circumſtances, (ſuppoſing them true), and attended only to the luſtre of that virtue with which they were peculiarly affected; that is, the generous purpoſe of Brutus hazarding his life to ſave his country; a purpoſe which friendſhip itſelf could not ſuppreſs. That this was laudable in Brutus, cannot be doubted: and it was this alone that engaged the admiration of the Athenians. For no man can imagine, that that wiſe people ſhould believe perjury, treachery and ingratitude not to be criminal in their own nature, but to derive their turpitude only from cuſtom and opinion.

We ſhall conſider another example, adduced by our Author, and that is adultery. He admits, that, among the Athenians, it was always reckoned among the worſt of crimes. But, in France, ſays he, p. 233. it is in the higheſt vogue and eſteem, and practiſed by every man of education, and tamely allowed by every man elſe.

By

BY this ingenious obſervation, we are led to believe, that the manners and opinions of the people of France, can alter the moral nature of things, and convert into a virtue, that vice; than which none is more oppoſite to the order of ſociety in general, or more everſive of the peace and happineſs of private and domeſtic life.

IF French manners conſtitute the proper ſtandard of virtue, our Author's reaſoning may be juſt; but if virtue preſcribes a law to the French, as well as to other people, then thoſe criminal practices, and infamous compliances above mentioned, muſt neceſſarily be reſolved into an extreme of vicious luxury upon the one hand, and abject meanneſs of ſpirit on the other.

OUR Author's opinion upon this occaſion, can only be founded in ſuch principles, as lead to this unavoidable conſequence, that whatever any ſet of men, or even any individual, may think fit to do, however criminal in itſelf, muſt yet be deemed a virtue; becauſe it is immediately agreeable to thoſe who practiſe it.

BUT let us ſuppoſe, that a whole nation ſhould univerſally countenance a bad practice, this never would alter the nature of things, nor give ſanction to vice.

THE

THE moral relations are founded in the eſſential difference betwixt happineſs and miſery; as this is unalterable in the nature of things, ſo muſt theſe be alſo. It is therefore a juſt obſervation of Cicero, in his treatiſe of laws, that no authority on earth can alter theſe moral diſtinctions. *Quod ſi populorum juſſis*, (ſays Cicero, *de legibus*), *ſi principium decretis, ſi ſententiis judicum jura conſtituerentur, jus eſſet latrocinari, jus adulterari, jus teſtamenta falſa ſupponere, ſi hæc ſuffragiis, aut ſciitis multitudinis, probarentur.*

BUT ſo far are the depraved cuſtoms of the multitude, or even the practices of the great from being the juſt ſtandard of morality, that virtue ſhines forth with the greater luſtre from amidſt bad practices; and even an univerſal corruption, renders it the more conſpicuous.

THE multitude of examples could never ſanctify venality and injuſtice in the Roman ſenate; but, on the contrary, ſpread a greater glory upon the integrity of Cato.

WHEN we compare the laws and cuſtoms of one nation with thoſe of another, it muſt ſurely be by ſome ſtandard in nature, independent of thoſe cuſtoms, that the preference is determined. This muſt alſo be the caſe, when we conſider the changes and revolutions of one and the ſame nation. We juſtly praiſe the virtue of the antient

tient Romans, in many reſpects: but that people ſunk at laſt into a total corruption of manners. In the gradual progreſſion from one extreme to another, vice might indeed be denominated ſo, till it became pretty general. But then the certain way to ſanctify vice, upon our Author's ſcheme, would be to run into the practice of it, by a general conſent; for then it would agree to what is made the ſtandard of virtue, *viz.* cuſtom and uſage: and, for the ſame reaſon, virtue, as being now neglected, muſt loſe its former denomination; and, as it is changed into the nature, it muſt alſo carry the name of vice.

THESE things appear glaringly abſurd, even to the vicious themſelves; for, in ſpite of all their bad practices, virtue, placed in a proper light, extorts praiſes from them whether they will or not. Our Author himſelf, not very conſtant in his opinions, would ſeem to make an exception of certain virtues, and to ſuppoſe them ſo founded in the nature of things, as that all nations muſt agree in them. Theſe, as he enumerates them, in p. 238. are, good ſenſe, knowledge, wit, eloquence, humanity, fidelity, truth, juſtice, courage, temperance, conſtancy, dignity of mind. In theſe, he ſays, the French and Athenians would certainly concur. With regard to the firſt four of theſe, we have already ſhown, that

that they are not moral virtues in themſelves, but may be miſapplied to the worſt of purpoſes. We have alſo conſidered in what reſpect courage is a moral virtue; nor need we repeat what has already been fully ſaid with regard to our Author's miſtaken notions of juſtice, and its branches, truth and fidelity. Humanity and temperance muſt indeed be allowed to be moral virtues; but they are eſtabliſhed upon a firmer foundation than vogue and faſhion, or the practices and conſent of nations. Were it otherwiſe, even humanity itſelf would have but a ſlender ſupport. For, not to mention inſtances of unnatural cruelty, generally practiſed by certain barbarous nations, even thoſe people who have been diſtinguiſhed for their genius, and the improvements of arts and ſciences, have, on many occaſions, been no leſs remarkable for the moſt ſhocking exceſſes of inhumanity. The Romans, toward the end of their commonwealth, afford us too convincing a proof of this; and the French and Athenians cannot always clear themſelves from the ſame charge. 'Tis ſcarce needful to mention conſtancy and dignity of mind, becauſe theſe are qualities which previouſly ſuppoſe the reality of virtue; for conſtancy, in a bad meaſure, could only be accounted a vicious obſtinacy, and an imaginary ſenſe of worth, founded upon qualities deſtitute of virtue, deſerves

ſerves no better name than pride, or vain conceit.

AFTER what has been ſaid, 'tis needleſs to make any farther reflexions upon the weakneſs and inconſiſtency of our Author's ſcheme; it is altogether violent and affected, and his purpoſe would ſeem to be, to ſubject nature to the fickle opinions of mankind, *ut hominum ſuffragiis rerum natura vertatur*, as Cicero, in the laſt mentioned place, elegantly expreſſes it.

VIRTUE is that conduct which, from a deliberate intention, purſues the good of others. The good of others is abundantly determined by the natural wants and juſt deſires of mankind; or if, in certain circumſtances, this ſhould be doubtful? yet, if we preſerve a right intention, the ſoul of virtue will ſtill remain. The motive to virtue ariſes from a ſenſe of its uſefulneſs, of its moral beauty and excellence, and its proper obligation is founded in a ſenſe of duty, which plainly relates to, and can only be fully ſupported by a principle and ſentiment of piety and religion. In this view, virtue muſt appear to be the peculiar care of the Deity, the natural inſtrument to facilitate the improvement of his wiſe and good deſigns: and therefore we muſt ever conſider virtue as that happy bond which unites private and public good, which gives us an enlargement of mind, and perſuade us, that,

in purſuing the good of others, we moſt effectually conſult our own proper happineſs. 'Tis probably the concurrence of all thoſe circumſtances which finiſhes the beauty of virtue, and gives it ſuch a reſiſtleſs power over the heart. And, if we ſhould not be able, with exactneſs, to explain the cauſe, yet is the effect not the leſs certain. It is what we are intimately conſcious of, and ſenſibly feel within our own breaſts. Nothing ſtrikes us more, in our calm reflexions, than the moral ſpecies; and we never can ſet virtue in too illuſtrious a point of light.

LUCAN makes virtue the temple in which God peculiarly delights to dwell.

Eſtne Dei ſedes, niſi terra, et pontus, et aer,
Et cœlum, et virtus.

PERSIUS makes virtue and vice reſpectively the eſſential ingredients of heaven and hell.

Summe pater divum, ſævos punire tyrannos,
Haud alia ratione velis.
Virtutem videant, intabeſcantque relicta.

NAY, we are naturally apt to catch the enthuſiaſm of Juvenal, when he ſays:

Summum crede nefas, animam preferre pudori.

BUT

BUT it is not here intended to retail theſe beautiful encomiums which the philoſophers have made upon virtue. From its direct and proper tendency to promote the happineſs of mankind, its excellence muſt appear in the ſtrongeſt light, and by thoſe marks of honour and authority, with which the Deity has inveſted it, its obligation is rendered ſacred and inviolable.

SECT. V.

Of RELIGION.

MAN is a creature inconſiderable in himſelf, but capable of the higheſt improvement; endued with large capacities and ſtrong deſires of happineſs; but, having few reſources within himſelf.

SUPPOSE a man, exiſting by himſelf, and quite cut off from the knowledge or perception of all other beings, and every part of nature, how compleatly miſerable muſt he be? In ſuch a ſolitary, dark, and gloomy ſtate, ſuppoſe the beauty lighted up in the natural world to break in upon his mind, what joy and delight muſt thence be communicated to his ſenſes and imagination? He muſt ſtill deſire a more noble and permanent ſatisfaction from the mental pleaſures of wiſdom and truth, and from the moral exerciſe of goodneſs, of friendſhip, and kind affection which give the ſweeteſt and moſt exalted reliſh to the pleaſing intercourſes of ſociety. But all this is far from being ſufficient to complete the happineſs of man. He ſtill feels abundance of wants and weakneſſes within himſelf.

He

He needs a proper ſecurity for the permanency and ſtability of what he poſſeſſes. And his mind, ever improving in its faculties, enlarges its proſpect of happineſs, both as to degree and duration; and diſſatisfied with its preſent acquiſitions, ſtill purſues ſome nobler ſpecies of good, without being able to aſſign any bounds to the increaſing influence of theſe natural deſires.

THE ſmalleſt reflexion muſt convince us, that this is the nature of man; and if this be ſo, it muſt prove, at the ſame time, that religion is ſtrongly founded in nature. For what can be more deſirable, more agreeable to the nature of man, as above delineated, than that there ſhould be a ſupreme Being, whoſe power can ſupply all his wants, and ſatisfy his moſt extenſive deſires; and whoſe goodneſs can give him full ſecurity of the permanent poſſeſſion of bliſs. 'Tis this conſideration alone that eſtabliſhes in the nature of things a counter-part to the proper nature of man, that maintains a juſt harmony and correſpondence betwixt them, and thereby prevents the faculties and deſires of the human mind from being fruitleſs and abortive, in contradiction to the general analogy of nature.

RELIGION is no leſs neceſſary to man, conſidered as a ſocial being. This is the true foundation of our idea of duty and obligation; it is

the proper ſource of theſe motives which muſt effectually touch the heart; and it is religion alone, that, by uniting duty and happineſs, can forever bind ſelf-love to the intereſt of virtue. In fact, the principle of conſcience, the ſenſe of honour, and thoſe other moral ſentiments which, independent of us, are planted in our breaſts, and render the intereſts of others our own, are real, and experimental proofs of the providence and ſuperintendency of a ſupreme Being.

WE do not here intend, however proper it might be, to point out the noble ſentiments, the peculiar pleaſures which religion inſpires, and their happy influence upon the ſocial virtues. This many of the antient philoſophers have done, of which Plato has given as a beautiful ſpecimen in his *Sympoſium*.

BUT, in regard we have conſidered religion as a neceſſary principle to complete the nature, and perfect the obligation of morality, it will be proper to remove the objections made by our Author againſt this principle.

IN p. 250. and the ſubſequent pages, he plainly ſuppoſes religion, which he is pleaſed commonly to denote by the name of ſuperſtition, to be an unnatural and artificial principle, a principle which with the antients was little regarded, did not operate upon their conduct, or influence them

them in the common affairs of life, but was limited, and confined to their temples. Nay, he ſeems even to conſider it, as oppoſite to the natural principles of morality, and tending to prevent the exertion and diſplay of our virtuous inclinations.

WE have already hinted, how ſtrongly religion is founded in nature, and ſhall only add another general conſideration tending to prove the ſame point, as Mr Hutcheſon delivers it in the following paragraph.

"UNDER this head of our internal ſenſes, "ſays he, we muſt obſerve one natural effect "of it, that it leads us into apprehenſions of a "Deity. Grandeur, beauty, order, harmony, "where-ever they occur, raiſe an opinion of a "mind, of deſign, and wiſdom. Every thing "great, regular, or proportioned, excites vene-"ration, either towards itſelf, if we imagine it "animated, if not animated, toward ſome ap-"prehended cauſe. No determination of our "mind is more natural than this, no effect "more univerſal. One has better reaſon to "deny the inclination between the ſexes to be "natural, than a diſpoſition in mankind to re-"ligion."

IT is not our preſent purpoſe to enlarge upon theſe abſtract arguments. Our principal intention

tion is, to conſider, how far in fact religion appears to have had the force of a natural and univerſal principle, this being what our Author ſeems chiefly to have in view. As, in eſtabliſhing a matter of fact, authorities muſt be of great weight, we ſhall begin with mentioning a few of them, in order to prove the natural and univerſal influence of religion upon mankind.

ÆLIAN, lib. ii. cap. 31. expreſſes himſelf in the following manner. "Who would not praiſe "the wiſdom of the Barbarians? for none of "them were ever perverted into atheiſm; none "of them ever doubted of the exiſtence of the "gods, or whether they concerned themſelves "with human affairs. None of the Indians, Celtæ, or Egyptians ever eſpouſed ſuch an impious "opinion, as Diogenes, Epicurus, and a few "more (whom he there mentions.) "On the "contrary, ſays he, they all aſſert the exiſtence, "and providence of the gods, and, in the firm "faith of this, they acknowledge their dependence upon the gods, and pay to them divine "honours", in the various methods which he particularly mentions.

WHAT Xenophon ſays to the ſame purpoſe in his *Sympoſium* is ſtill more remarkable. He there introduces Hermogenes ſpeaking in the following manner. "It is extremely evident, that both

"Greeks

"Greeks and Barbarians believe that the gods
"know all things preſent and to come. Every city,
"every nation conſults the gods by divination, what
"they ought to do, and what they ſhould decline:
"and we are all fully convinced, that they can do
"to us either good, or ill. In conſequence of this,
"all mankind beſeech them to avert ill, and
"grant them what is good. Thoſe gods, who
"are thus infinite in wiſdom and power, are ſo
"much my friends, and have ſuch a concern a-
"bout me, that they never forget me by night,
"or by day, where-ever I go, or whatever I do.
"And, becauſe they foreknow every future e-
"vent, by ſending angels, voices, dreams, and
"birds, they warn me what I ſhould do,
"and what I ſhould forbear. And, when I re-
"gard their admonitions, I always find my ac-
"count in it; but, if I neglect them, I ſuffer for
"it. All this is extremely reaſonable, ſays So-
"crates; but one thing I would gladly know,
"by what manner of ſervice and devotion it is,
"that you make them ſo much your friends. I
"aſſure you, replied Hermogenes, I do this at
"a very eaſy rate. I praiſe them, which coſts
"me nothing; and, when I give them any thing,
"it is but part of what I before received from
"them: I talk of them always with reverence;
"and, when I call upon them to witneſs my pro-
"miſes, I am ſtrictly conſcientious in the per-
"formance of them. Certainly, ſays Socrates,

"ſince

" ſince, by theſe means, you procure the friend-
" ſhip of the gods, they muſt delight in virtue."

I ſhall quote one paſſage more from Cicero's 2d book of laws, where he delivers his ſentiments ſomewhat more philoſophically.

THAT great philoſopher, in imitation of Plato, eſtabliſhes a ſolid foundation of his laws in a juſt ſenſe of religion, and expreſſes himſelf in the following manner; *Sit igitur hoc jam a principio perſuaſum civibus*, &c. that is, " Let all the
" citizens be previouſly perſuaded of this, that
" the gods are lords and governors of this uni-
" verſe; and that all things are conducted by
" their authority and influence; that they are the
" greateſt benefactors of mankind? that they
" ſee the intentions of mens hearts, and know
" the ſincerity of their religion, and make a
" proper difference betwixt the pious and impious.
" When the minds of men are influenced by ſuch
" principles, they will be the more ſuſceptible
" of the impreſſions of truth and goodneſs.
" For what truth can be more certain than
" this, that none ought to be ſo fooliſhly arro-
" gant as to believe, that he himſelf is poſſeſſed
" of reaſon and underſtanding; and yet that
" the great whole, this regular univerſe, is de-
" void of it. And that perſon who can obſerve
" the beautiful order of the ſtars, the grateful
" viciſſitude of night and day, the agreeable
" temperament

" temperament of the ſeaſons, who conſiders all " the bleſſings and comforts that earth produces, " without gratitude to the great Diſpoſer of all " things, deſerves to have his name ſtruck off " from the liſt of human kind. Further, ſince " all things, endued with reaſon, are better than " thoſe which are deſtitute of it, and it would " be abſurd and impious to affirm, that any poor " individual is better than the univerſal nature " of things, it muſt be a neceſſary conſequence, " that this univerſal nature is governed by in- " telligence. And can any perſon doubt of the " uſefulneſs and advantage of ſuch opinions, who " conſiders, how many things are confirmed by " an oath, how ſacred thoſe treaties are which " are ratified by religion, and how many men " are with-held from wickedneſs from the appre- " henſion of divine vengeance, who conſi- " ders how ſacred and inviolate that ſociety muſt " be, which is maintained by the authority of the " gods, the witneſſes and judges of our conduct." I ſhall only obſerve further, from this excellent Author, that, in his firſt book of laws, having remarked, that, of all animals, man alone is capable of any knowledge of God." " And of " men, ſays he, there is no nation ſo rude and " barbarous, but who, whatever wrong notions " they may form of God, are yet ſtill perſuaded " of this truth, that they ought to acknowledge " a God. Hence it is, that man who knows,

" and

"and, as it were, remembers his own original, "muſt be led to the acknowledgment of a Dei-"ty."

IF any thing can give additional weight to ſuch ſtrong proofs of this important truth, that religion is a natural principle, it muſt be the teſtimony of the Epicureans themſelves; men who, from paſſion, prejudice, and the prevailing faſhion of the times, were induced to doubt, or deny a divine providence. Such were Horace, and Virgil, who lived in a diſſolute age, when impiety was in vogue. When theſe, therefore, ſpeak out their natural ſentiments, their teſtimony muſt be ſo much the more unexceptionable. Theſe we ſhall examine with our uſual brevity.

HORACE, in ſpite of the impiety of his affected philoſophy, often celebrates the praiſes of the gods in a juſt and beautiful manner; he commends that purity and uprightneſs with which we ſhould approach their altars; he affirms, that a man of innocence and integrity of life, is the peculiar object of the divine care, and needs no arms to repel the greateſt dangers, other than the protection of Providence. This is the plain meaning of that beautiful ode,

Integer vitæ, ſceleriſque purus,
Non eget Mauri jaculis, &c.

IN fine, he ſeriouſly warns his countrymen againſt the neglect of religion; and, to this cauſe, imputes

imputes all the calamities they met with. He aſſures them, that they may expect to govern the nations, upon this condition only, that they themſelves duly acknowledge their conſtant ſubjection to the gods.

Dis te minorem quod geris, imperas;
Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.

NAY, when he calmly conſiders the Atheiſm of Epicurus, he is ſenſible of his error; and, with great propriety, calls it, *inſaniens ſapientia*, a philoſophy that deſerves the name of madneſs.

WITH regard to Virgil, it is needleſs to ſay much; becauſe it is the general deſign of his poem, in the character of Æneas, to recommend piety to a Court, at once the moſt diſſolute, and the moſt polite. He is always careful to maintain the due honour of religion, and thinks the particular acts of it becoming the higheſt characters in life. Of this we have a remarkable example in that pious prayer, which he puts in Dido's mouth, after the entertainment ſhe gave to the Trojan chiefs: and, upon all proper occaſions, he ſtill preſerves the ſame decorum.

BUT what we ſhall further obſerve, as moſt material for our preſent purpoſe, is, that Virgil is at pains expreſsly to give us the character of an Atheiſt, in the perſon of Mezentius. That prince is introduced in the ſeventh book of the

Æneid, as an avowed deſpiſer of the gods.

Contemptor divum Mizentius.

AND, in the tenth book, he is made to acknowledge no other god, but his own right hand, and the dart which it held.

Dextra mihi deus, et telum quod miſſile libro.

AND afterwards he gives a bold defiance to all the gods at once.

Nec mortem horremus, nec divum parcimus ulli.

OUR curioſity muſt no doubt be awakened to know in what a moral light, with regard to men, this impious prince is repreſented by ſo judicious a poet: and it will appear, that his character is perhaps the moſt wicked and abandoned that we meet with in that whole poem. It is true, Virgil allows him abundance of courage, and a ſtrong degree of paternal affection; but, at the ſame time, he repreſents him as a moſt cruel and oppreſſive tyrant, whom his ſubjects dethroned for his unſupportable crimes, and ſtill purſued where-ever he went, with an unrelenting hate. And he pathetically deplores the unhappy condition of the virtuous Lauſus, for having been the ſon of ſuch an infamous father.

THUS the Epicureans themſelves, even thoſe of them who were moſt diſtinguiſhed for a true judgment, and juſt ſentiments, when yielding to the natural dictates of their hearts, have given ample

ample teſtimony in favours of religion, in ſpite of their affected prejudices; ſo prevailing is the force of nature, and ſo ſtrongly muſt religion be founded in nature.

BUT further, to confirm this important truth, we ſhall make a few more particular obſervations upon its actual influence on mankind.

THAT the antients had religion in the higheſt honour and eſteem; that they worſhipped and acknowledged the gods almoſt upon every occaſion, by a variety of rites and ceremonies, often very magnificent and expenſive, is a matter of fact, not queſtioned. But our Author inſinuates, that they left their religion behind them in the temples; and that it had no influence on their lives. To what purpoſe, then, was all that concern which they diſcovered with regard to religious inſtitutions? Why did religion make ſo great a part of their laws, enter ſo deeply into every affair of moment, and mix itſelf ſo univerſally with all their cuſtoms? 'Tis impoſſible to account for this, but upon ſuppoſition of the natural tendency of religion, to influence the manners and conduct of mankind.

IN fact, no obligation was found of force to ſecure the faith, and bind the conſciences of men, equal to that of religion. Hence oaths were

deviſed to bind magiſtrates to the faithful diſcharge of their duty; and as well to ſecure private contracts, as to ſtrengthen public treaties. Thus, a ſimple regard to faith and juſtice was conſidered but as a ſlender tye, in compariſon of the immediate impreſſions of religion. But the man who perjured himſelf, was thought infamous and profligate to the laſt degree, and conſidered as liable to the ſevereſt torments in hell.

To avoid too great an excurſion into ſo large a ſubject, we ſhall ſhortly conſider the influence which religion had upon the antient Romans. Machiavel, in his diſcourſes on Livy, tells us, that, for ſeveral ages together, never was the fear of God more eminently conſpicuous than in that republic. And, to this principle, he aſcribes all their good laws, their proſperity and greatneſs.

PLINY, in the beginning of his panegyric obſerves, that it was a wiſe and pious inſtitution of their anceſtors, to engage in no buſineſs without firſt offering up their prayers to the gods: for they thought, ſays he, that they could not go about any thing in a right manner, or promiſe upon ſuitable ſucceſs, without duly honouring the gods; and thereby obtaining their aid and aſſiſtance.

AND

AND Cicero, in his oration, *de aruſpicum reſponſis*, inſinuates, that the Romans did not gain the empire of the world, becauſe of their ſuperiority to other nations, in number, ſtrength, wiſdom, or learning; but becauſe they excelled them all in piety and religion, in that wiſdom which ſubjected them to the authority and government of the immortal gods. His words are ſo remarkable that I ſhall here tranſcribe them. *Quam volumus licet, patres conſcripti, nos amemus; tamen nec numero Hiſpanos, nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Pœnos, nec artibus Græcos; nec denique hoc ipſo hujus gentis, et terræ domeſtico nativoque ſenſu Italos et Latinos; ſed pietate ac religione, atque hac una ſapientia quod deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernariique perſpeximus, omnes gentes nationeſque ſuperavimus.*

To theſe we ſhall add the authority of Livy, who gives us a remarkable example of the truth of this obſervation. When Herdonius, at the head of a conſiderable number of ſlaves and exiles, had ſurpriſed the capitol, and brought the city into the utmoſt danger; ſo great were the animoſities betwixt the Patricians and Plebeians, that theſe laſt were, with difficulty, perſuaded by Valerius the Conſul, to take up arms in this dangerous juncture. Valerius attacked the capitol; the attack ſucceeded, though the Conſul periſhed in it. Quinctius Cincinnatus was cho-

ſen in his place, a mortal enemy to the Tribunes. In order to divert their domeſtic broils, Quinctius propoſed to take the field with an army; the Tribunes aſked him, how he could expect to make any levies? he anſwered, he had no occaſion for a levy, he would ſummon thoſe ſoldiers who had been ſworn to Valerius, and had not been looſed from their military oath. The Tribunes replied, that they were not bound by that oath; for they had not taken it to him. Livy obſerves, that this cavilling of the Tribunes had no effect upon the people; and adds, in commendation of the Romans of that time, "The neglect "of the gods which now prevails, was not known "in that age; men did not then explain oaths and "laws as beſt ſuited their intereſt, but made theſe "the ſtrict rule of their conduct and behaviour." Hardly can we imagine a ſtronger inſtance of regard to an oath than this: for thoſe Romans, who were ready to ſacrifice even their city, and every thing that was dear to them, to their inteſtine feuds, never heſitated to ſubject all theſe to the ſuperior dictates of religion. 'Tis true, the influence of religion may decay, as it afterwards did at Rome; but that is no proof of the natural weakneſs of this principle, where it is properly attended to, but only, that men may be without it.

FROM the ſeveral obſervations we have already made, it muſt appear, that a juſt ſenſe of religion is a ſtrong, natural, and univerſal principle, and

and immediately tends to excite us to virtue, and the practice of our duty. Nay this laſt muſt be true, if we ſhould even ſuppoſe religion to be a device of Politicians; for this muſt be the very reaſon of ſuch device, that they may the more effectually determine men to the practice of their duty. Nothing therefore, in every view, can be wiſer in the ſupreme magiſtrate, or more dutiful in every private ſubject, than not only to ſecure religion from contempt, but to maintain it in juſt veneration and eſteem.

OUR Author, however, ſeems not at all ſenſible of this; he ſtill endeavours to diſcover its weakneſs, by condeſcending on particular inſtances. For this purpoſe, he gives us a curious contraſt of the characters of Diogenes the Cynic, and Mr Paſcal, much to the diſadvantage of the latter. Diogenes indeed was a profeſſed Atheiſt: And if our Author thinks, it tends any way to his praiſe, that, after, in his fancy, he had baniſhed God from heaven, he lived as an independent being, and conſidered himſelf as a God, within his own tub. If our Author thinks in this manner, I ſay, it is an opinion ſo very abſurd, that it would be no ſmall abſurdity to go about to diſpute it.

With regard to Diogenes's whimſical and abſurd philoſophy, I am in no concern about it; and ſhall diſmiſs him, as very unworthy of the company he is placed in, after having obſerved, that

that he was a perpetual exile from his own country, for the crime of falſe coinage, and that his character conſiſted chiefly of theſe ingredients, impiety, pride, impudence, and ill-nature, which juſtly expoſed him to the odium of mankind, and brought upon the ſect, of which he was a leader, the epithet of cynic or dog-like.

As for Mr Paſcal, that he was devoted to the church of Rome is true; nor will I diſſemble, that his character contracted ſome blemiſhes upon that account; yet it would be extremely hard to make no allowances for human infirmity, but to expect that men ſhould be altogether free of errors or faults. Our Author's ſcheme of virtue does not, ſure, intitle him to make ſo high a demand. Mr Paſcal's faults however were but like ſpots in the ſun. He poſſeſſed the eſſentials of religion, and thoſe he applied to the nobleſt improvements in virtue. If our Author blames him for his conſtant dependence on God for his happineſs, it muſt ſurely be, becauſe he forgets what kind of a creature man is. But it ſeems, he endeavoured to be indifferent about his relations, and to love, and ſpeak well of his enemies. The firſt is an inſinuation compatible with Mr Paſcal's admirable diſcernment; for, as it was his religion that taught him to love his enemies, he was too wiſe not to know that the ſame religion obliged him to have a proper regard for his relations; and ſurely the one duty was as

eaſy

eaſy as the other. Our Author ſeems to allow Mr Paſcal this virtue of love to enemies, as if it were an unnatural one; but as it is, in ſome meaſure, peculiar to Chriſtianity, it entirely ſuits its complexion: for that religion repreſents men not only as brethren, but as deſigned for the happieſt union in an eternal bond of friendſhip. If we conſider men in this light, it muſt appear abſurd and monſtrous in them to treat one another as enemies, for trifling differences that are ſo ſoon to be removed. Mr Paſcal's contemplative turn, and bad ſtate of health, made him chuſe retirement: the laſt he ſuſtained with true Chriſtian fortitude, and the firſt gave him an occaſion to do greater ſervices to mankind, than the buſieſt ſcenes of moſt other men could effect. His provincial letters muſt do honour to the human underſtanding; and equally prove, that he knew virtue, and could bravely practiſe it. Our Author, however, ſeems to hint, that Paſcal might have been virtuous, if he had not been religious. Strange inſinuation! as if religion, like the plague, corrupted every thing it approached. What! muſt the moſt exalted genius, the juſteſt diſcernment, the greateſt integrity and purity of manners, the braveſt ſelf-expoſure in defence of virtue; muſt all theſe forfeit their claim to the name of virtue, becauſe conjoined with, and animated by, the moſt ſincere piety.

I am willing to retract this reflexion as improper, becauſe humanity obliges us to ſuppoſe that the generality of our Author's expreſſion has rendered his meaning obſcure; and therefore liable to be miſunderſtood.

I ſhall, however, in order to ſhow this matter in a different point of view, conſider the character of a another perſon, a countryman of Mr Paſcal's, and his nearly contemporary, but a Proteſtant, and placed in ſuch a public ſituation as to engage the attention of all Europe, I mean Philippe Mornay. I do not pretend to do juſtice to ſuch an illuſtrious character. By the proper improvement of theſe extraordinary talents with which nature had bleſſed him, he was enabled to make that eminent figure, both in the cabinet and ſenate, which could be equalled by nothing but his military ſkill, and his courage in the field. It was, however, his untainted probity that added the brighteſt luſtre to all his accompliſhments. And that religion was the ſoul that animated his virtue, and influenced his whole conduct, is ſo certain, as not to need any proof. Kings, even thoſe for whom he had the greateſt regard, courted him in vain, where he thought his God forbade; and nothing but what was right and juſt in itſelf could ever alter the firm purpoſes of his heart. His noble freedom, his inflexible virtue, joined to the manifeſt purity of his

his intentions, did not fail to gain him the admiration and eſteem of all men, his enemies not excepted. But I muſt decline the unequal taſk of drawing together ſo many virtues, and ſhall content myſelf with borrowing thoſe ſtrokes which Voltaire (whoſe teſtimony muſt be free from all ſuſpicion of partiality) has made in his Henriade, where Mornay appears to be the real hero, and placed in the ſame elevation, with regard to the King, as Mentor is with reſpect to Telemaque.

IT may be previouſly obſerved, that the only blemiſh Voltaire affixes upon his character, ariſes from his ſuppoſed hereſy; but in this perhaps he will ſcarcely be thought to have been in earneſt.

IN his firſt canto, where he ſuppoſes Henry IV. ſetting out for England to ſolicit the aſſiſtance of Queen Elizabeth, he makes Mornay his ſole companion, and thus repreſents him:

Mornay's his ſole companion, his beſt friend,
His confident, but not his flatterer,
Support, too virtuous, on error's ſide,
Who, fam'd alike for prudence and for zeal,
With like affection ſerves his church, and
France,
Cenſor of courtiers, but at court beloved
Vow'd enemy of Rome, at Rome eſteem'd.

IN

IN the deſcription he gives of an aſſault upon Paris, in his ſixth canto, he exerts all his genius to increaſe the horrors of the ſight, and indeed repreſents Henry the Great in the attitude of a true hero; and then gives the following account of Mornay:

Mornay, among theſe rapid floods of flame,
Grave, but intrepid, mingles with the war,
Incapable of fury and of fear;
Deaf to the roar of cannons and of bombs,
And calm amidſt the tempeſt of the fight,
He looks on battles with a Stoic's eye
As neceſſary flails of wrathful ſkies;
Like a philoſopher, where honour guides
He marches, and condemning fights, avoids
No danger, pities Henry, and attends.

HE ſhows him, in the ſame ſublime elevation, in the dreadful deſcription he gives of the battle of Ivry, in his third canto:

The faithful Mornay follows him ſerene
And, calm amidſt the tempeſt of the war,
Waits on, and watches o'er him through the field,
Like his good genius on that dreadful day;
See there, ſays he, that ſhock'd battalion flies
Mayne's troops are in arreſt near yonder wood,
Aumale advances, let us meet his march.

Thus

Thus he aſſiſts him in the fight, and guards,
More than one blow, while yet he ſpeaks, wards off:
But, Stoical, will not permit his hand
To ſlay, or ſhew the ſtain of human blood,
His ſoul is only for his King concerned,
He, only to defend him, draws his ſword:
Combats he hates, but knows not what is fear,
Dares death, and never gives the death he dares.

IT may be obſerved, that the poet ſtrains the character a little here; for Mornay fought like other men. But the fiction has this juſt foundation, that Mornay, amidſt the unavoidable calamities of war, exerted all that charity and humanity, with which his religion inſpired him, to make theſe calamities as little felt, and to mitigate them as much as was poſſible.

IN the ninth canto, upon occaſion of a very delicate conjuncture, the character of Mornay is repreſented in a variety of very ſtriking and beautiful lights. After the battle of Ivry, the King privately left the camp, to indulge his paſſion for his favourite miſtreſs Gabriele de Eſtrée. The genius of France, alarmed at this miſconduct, and the fatal effects it was like to produce, is repreſented as deſcending from heaven, in order to avert the impending danger.

Earth, he with eyes inquiſitive, ſurvey'd,
To find a ſage to miniſter his will;
He ſearch'd not gloomy halls, nor cells rever'd
For ſtudy, ſilence, and affected faſt,
He ſpeeds to Ivry, and, amidſt the rage,
And riot of licentious conquering troops,
Watchful o'er France, this angel fix'd his flight
Divine, among the tents of Calvin's ſons,
To Mornay he addreſſes.

AND, ſoon after, gives him the following character.

A friend diſcreet, philoſopher ſevere,
Mornay, at once, knew to reprove and pleaſe.
More than his leſſons, his example taught;
He knew no loves but ſolid virtues; toil
To him was pleaſure, and fatigues, delights:
Firm was his foot on precipices wild;
Not the court air a ſoft infectious breath
E'er chang'd or touch'd his purity of mind.
Fair Arethuſa thus her happy waves
To wand'ring Amphitrite's boſom rolls;
Her cryſtal waters, pure as at her ſpring,
Corruption never from the ſea receive.

Soon generous Mornay, wiſdom's ſelf his guide,
Departs, and to theſe woods enchanted flies.

THEN

THEN the poet gives a fine deſcription of the beautiful retreat where the two lovers were concealed, repreſents love as full of indignation at the ſight of Mornay, but impotent to hurt him. He deſcribes the King's confuſion mixed with veneration of that great man.

Ill had another taken Mornay's care:
For few in faults love witneſſes, and leaſt
In faults of love. Dear friend, ſays Henry, come;
Thy prince's heart's ſtill worthy thee, 'tis done.

MORNAY anſwers him with dignity and reſpect, and concludes with great delicacy.

Who knows not love is happy, who ſubdues
Illuſtrious.

THEN the King is repreſented, as diſtracted betwixt love and virtue, Gabriele and Mornay: the laſt however prevails.

Mornay, whoſe ſtubborn virtue nought could bend,
Draws after him the King, ſtill loth to leave
Theſe dear abodes, but ſtill more loth to ſtay.

THESE lineaments of ſuch illuſtrious virtue, tho' under no ſmall diſadvantage from the defects of the Engliſh tranſlation, are yet ſufficient to raiſe

a high idea of that character, which was the object of the eſteem, love, and admiration of mankind.

AND this muſt afford an argument deciſive of the point in iſſue. But I cannot quit this ſubject, without firſt doing juſtice to the heathen world.

THAT Socrates was a man of the moſt diſtinguiſhing virtue, will readily be allowed: That his exalted virtue was chiefly founded upon a religious principle; of this perhaps a proof may be demanded. We ſhall then endeavour to prove this, by the teſtimony of two witneſſes, in every reſpect perfectly qualified: I mean, Xenophon, and Plato. They were both his conſtant hearers, intimately acquainted with his life, and thoroughly inſtructed in his principles. They were perſons eminent for wiſdom and great abilities, and made an illuſtrious figure in the public world. The firſt gained an immortal name from his military conduct; the other was reſpected as a legiſlator, by many ſtates of Greece. The converſation of both was courted by the greateſt men of the age. The firſt particularly lived in intimate friendſhip with Ageſilaus, the illuſtrious King of Sparta; and the other with Dion, the generous deliverer of ingrateful Syracuſe. We ſhall then begin with Xenophon's teſtimony.

THE

THE Athenian fleet, under the conduct of ten admirals, gained a conſiderable victory at Arginuſæ over the fleet of Sparta, having deſtroyed ſeventy of the enemies galleys, with the loſs only of twelve of their own. Soon thereafter, ſix of theſe admirals, who happened to be at Athens, were, from pure envy, and by wicked practices, brought under the odium of the people: and an accuſation, upon groundleſs pretences, was propoſed to be carried on againſt them, without allowing them the legal forms of ſelf-defence. This matter was remitted to the ſenate of five hundred. The ſenate, intimidated by the angry ſpirits of the people, prepared a decree contrary to law, with regard to the form of trial. However, when the decree came to be read in an aſſembly of the people, the preſidents of the ſenate, (being ten in number, and of whom Socrates was firſt preſident) firmly oppoſed its execution, ſenſible of its groſs injuſtice. But this had no other effect, than to increaſe the rage, and menances of the people, to which the whole ſenators gave way through fear, except Socrates alone. He boldly declared, that he never would conſent to any thing, but what was agreeable to law: and, by this conduct, never too much to be admired, his hands were pure from the blood of theſe innocent and brave men; which afterwards brought the Athenians under the deepeſt remorſe. Xenophon gives us the foregoing ac-

count in his Greek hiſtory, and, in his Memorabilia, he explains the reaſon of this heroic inſtance of juſtice: Socrates, ſays he, had taken an oath, always to give his opinion agreeable to law.

AND Socrates believed, that the Gods were every where preſent, knew all our words and actions, and even perceived the thoughts of our hearts. And he afterwards adds, that, in his whole behaviour, he ever expreſſed the greateſt regard to religion.

WE ſhall next ſhortly conſider, how far Plato agrees with this account. In his Apology, he introduces Socrates explaining to his judges his uſeful philoſophic manner of life, and he tells them, that he conſiders it as the province aſſigned him by heaven, and declares, that he was reſolved to adhere to it, tho' in that ſervice of God he ſhould be reduced to the greateſt poverty. He afterwards adds, that, if his judges would acquit him, upon promiſe to deſert this ſtation, he would not purchaſe life upon ſuch terms; for, that he was determined rather to obey God than them. In the ſeveral battles in which I fought, ſays Socrates, I kept the rank aſſigned me by my commanding officers, with as much fidelity as any of my fellow-citizens, in defiance of all danger: and how then ſhould the fear

fear of death induce me to abandon that poſt which God himſelf has aſſigned me? Whether death be an evil, I know not; but that to diſobey God is ill, I certainly know.

IN Crito, Socrates is at great pains to perſuade his diſciples to regulate their lives, not according to the cuſtoms and opinions of the multitude, but according to the will of that Being who is truth itſelf, and whom we ought to fear and reverence more than all other beings beſide, and whom if we forſake, we will certainly be led into vice

IN Phaedo, Socrates draws this beautiful inference from the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, which he had been eſtabliſhing: If then, ſays he, my friends, the ſoul is immortal, it muſt claim our greateſt care and concern, not ſo much with regard to the preſent life, as to its future and eternal exiſtence: and there is no poſſibility of ſecuring its happineſs hereafter, but by ſtudying now to make the greateſt improvements in wiſdom and virtue.

'TIS needleſs to quote any more paſſages; from what has been already ſaid, the proof of what was undertaken muſt appear compleat.

IF we ſhall now calmly reflect upon the preceeding reaſonings and obſervations, whether we conſider

conſider the matter in a more abſtracted view, or as ſupported and aſcertained by the univerſal ſentiments and experience of mankind, we muſt be convinced that religion is a ſtrong and natural principle. And how can it be otherwiſe, ſince it happily agrees with what is excellent in our nature, and only counterworks what is diſtempered and wrong. If we are diſpoſed to do juſtice, or to ſhew mercy, religion will applaud and inſpire us too. But, if we prefer injuſtice and cruelty, it will indeed oppoſe us there, and give eternal diſturbance.

RELIGION denies none of the innocent pleaſures of life, but improves them all with the addition of gratitude to their bountiful author. Yet, if we too keenly purſue the pleaſures of ſenſe, religion will check our career, and put us in mind, that it is more agreeable to our nature, as ſocial creatures, to prefer the pleaſures of virtue. Religion, therefore, only thwarts and diſcourages vice; but, at the ſame time, it countenances and cheriſhes virtue. If virtue, then, be natural, or if it be a juſt and proper improvement in man, religion muſt neceſſarily be ſo too.

IF nature requires a proper object and ſupport for thoſe ſtrong paſſions, unlimited deſires, and elevated

elevated ſentiments, which are planted in the human breaſt, then religion which alone can ſupply theſe muſt be natural, and even neceſſary to a creature of ſuch a peculiar and ſo noble a make as man.

CON-

CONCLUSION.

MORALITY, as a ſyſtem, has ever been a ſubject of much ſpeculation and diſpute: hence hath ariſen a great diverſity of opinions amongſt Philoſophers, in different ages of the world.

Some characters, however, are ſo manifeſtly founded in the moſt eſſential principles of human nature, as that they always muſt be, and indeed univerſally have been attributed to virtue, without the leaſt heſitation.

VIRTUE has ever been conſidered as a principle which leads to the good of ſociety; ſelf-love, or a deſire of happineſs, which is ſo inſeparable from the human mind, will not ſuffer it to be otherwiſe. Even the private virtues themſelves, are beſt aſcertained, and derive their chief excellence from their influence upon the ſocial ones.

THERE is another character of virtue, no leſs univerſally acknowledged, *viz.* that in point of ſtrength and authority, it muſt be ſupreme in the human mind, and take the habitual command of the conduct. Should any perſon occaſionally diſplay, even remarkable inſtances of juſtice, humanity, generoſity, and other ſocial virtues,

and

and withal, in his habitual conduct, practiſe the contrary vices, no one would conſider ſuch a perſon as virtuous; no, the character entirely depends upon conſtancy and uniformity of conduct and behaviour; from this alone it is, that men are denominated, either virtuous or vicious.

WITHOUT entering any further into the idea of virtue, we may, from the obſervations now made, diſcover a criterion, which will enable us to diſtinguiſh this quality, from every other mental quality whatever, and that with the greateſt certainty.

WE ſhall, therefore, very ſhortly examine ſome of theſe qualities, which Mr *Hume* has claſſed among the moral virtues (of which he has given us a large catalogue) and try how far they they agree to the ſtandards above mentioned.

AMONGST theſe, we find addreſs, forethought, induſtry, perſeverance, ſecrecy, fortitude, judgment, and others of the like nature. Now it is evident, that all ſuch qualities are indeed uſeful in the execution of any deſign of importance, but they do not, of themſelves, lead us to the good of ſociety; nay, they all may be employed, in accompliſhing a bad, as well as a good purpoſe; and if they are denominated virtuous, when ſubſervient to the cauſe of virtue, they are as certainly vicious, if they become infamous miniſters of vice.

vice. With regard to this, even ſcepticiſm cannot find the leaſt pretence, to heſitate or doubt; for as certainly as men deſire happineſs, they muſt equally have an averſion to the ſource, or cauſe of miſery and diſtreſs. To purſue any further reaſoning upon the ſubject, would be like fetching a candle to the light of the ſun.

HAVING therefore diſmiſſed from the rank of moral virtues, ſuch a large ſet of mental qualities, we ſhall proceed to conſider others, whoſe pretenſions ſeem to be much better founded.

OF theſe we may ſingle out juſtice, fidelity, humanity, gratitude, generoſity; and many others of the like nature, might be mentioned.

THESE qualities, indeed, have all a natural tendency to the good of ſociety, and conſequently agree to one eſſential character of virtue, upon which account, they are juſtly enough denominated virtuous. But we muſt conſider this matter with ſome attention, that we may not be miſled.

THE poſſeſſion of the qualities now mentioned by the gift of nature, is no doubt a remarkable advantage, and greatly facilitates the improvement of virtue. But if any perſon, ſo poſſeſſed of them, ſhall neglect their proper culture, and leave them only to operate, in virtue of their natural ſtrength, often in oppoſition to ſtrong

and

and unreſtrained paſſions of a contrary tendency, what other conſequence can we expect, but a very irregular conduct, diſtracted betwixt different ſpecies of virtue and vice; ſuch as never can give any man a claim to real virtue, which denotes a firm and ſteady principle.

IN real life, we may often obſerve perſons poſſeſſed of great humanity and tenderneſs, and even intereſted in the concerns of others, by a very ſtrong ſympathy, and alſo acting properly in conſequence of theſe amiable diſpoſitions; but, upon ſome occaſions, we ſhall find the very ſame perſons purſuing rigorous and oppreſſive meaſures, with uncommon harſhneſs and ſeverity, and perſiſting alſo in ſuch conduct.

IT will be vain, therefore, to ſearch for the principle of virtue, in mere temper and natural conſtitution; we muſt trace its ſource a great deal higher.

IN further confirmation of the truth of this, we need only ſhortly remark, that the moſt illuſtrious characters of virtue, have not always been built upon a happy natural temper, but ſometimes upon the reverſe.

OF this Socrates affords us a noted example; we ſhall only further make ſome remarks upon the character of Phocion. That great man was

frequently engaged in diſputes with the factious leaders of the people; which he often maintained with abundance of animoſity, and even of acrimony. Nay, he was bold enough, often to reprehend the vices of individuals in a public manner: Yet, when from his military talents and abilities, we might have expected to find him diſtinguiſhed by the title of great, his countrymen choſe rather with univerſal conſent, to beſtow upon him, the more illuſtrious epithet of the good Phocion.

THIS is juſtly enough accounted for by Plutarch, who obſerves, that, though the ſeverity of Phocion's public virtue, and even his free animadverſions, on the vices of individuals, procured him many enemies, yet when any of thoſe met with misfortunes, and fell into diſtreſs, none was more ready to fly to their relief, and aſſiſtance, than Phocion; of this he gives the following inſtance.

ARISTOGITON the ſycophant, (whoſe vices Phocion had on former occaſions ſeverely cenſured), was fined and thrown into priſon for his miſdemeanors. He earneſtly deſired an interview with Phocion.

PHOCION's friends diſſuaded him from being in company with ſuch a fellow, in ſuch a place. But

But his reply was, I know no place where I would ſo willingly chooſe to give Ariſtogiton a meeting. A noble inſtance of a rational, I had almoſt ſaid, of a divine virtue.

IN ſuch a character, we may eaſily diſcover the happy influence of the wiſe precepts of his great maſter, Plato. It may indeed ſeem ſuperfluous, to uſe many arguments and obſervations, to prove a point, which carries its own evidence in its boſom, *viz.* that virtue is not founded merely in a good natural temper and diſpoſitions, but denotes ſuch a firm purpoſe and reſolution, as takes the habitual command of the conduct.

MY Lord Shafteſbury has been at a great deal of pains to prove, that virtue is placed merely in good affections, and adds no other circumſtance, to diſtinguiſh the human, from the brute ſpecies, but that of a reflex approbation of ſuch affections. Yet truth will often get the better of a ſyſtem raſhly embraced, and his Lordſhip is, upon other occaſions, obliged to allow, that virtue, muſt be a firm purpoſe, and ſteady reſolution; that this can only be eſtabliſhed and maintained by the higher powers of the mind; that it includes a meaning and intention to do good; and that it is the beautifying, and not the beautified, which is the truly beautiful; as has been formerly more particularly obſerved.

ANY ſingle act of virtue, may indeed excite our approbation or applauſe; but if we apply virtue to a character in general, it is a principle which muſt be firmly eſtabliſhed in the heart, and take the habitual direction of the whole conduct. It muſt influence us, in oppoſition to any particular ſpecies of private intereſt, and its operation muſt be independent of the opinions of others, and whether they can obſerve our motives or not.

IF ſuch is the nature of virtue, as is not, and cannot be doubted, it will be eaſy to judge of any action, that may, from a ſuperficial view, be denominated virtuous. If we ſuppoſe it to flow, from that firm and ſincere diſpoſition which has been mentioned, it is indeed virtuous; but, if otherwiſe, it has more ſhew than ſolidity; it wants a proper foundation, and therefore cannot at all be depended upon.

HAVING now made the few preceeding obſervations, in order to diſtinguiſh virtue from every other quality, which may aſſume that name; it may be proper to make ſome general reflexions upon the means and motives of its eſtabliſhment in the mind; whereby its true dignity and excellence will ſtill be placed in a ſtronger point of light.

THE

THE principle of honour is deeply rooted in the human mind, and very often co-operates with the principle of virtue; but, as honour relates to the opinions of others, whenever theſe may be ignorant of our deſigns, this principle can have no effect at all; and it will have a bad one, if the opinions of others ſhould be erroneous, or depraved: for, in this caſe, it will betray us into vice.

THE principle of honour is therefore, far from being a ſure guide, and virtue is often moſt illuſtrious when it oppoſes it.

THERE are, however, other principles in the human heart, which directly lead to the proper object of virtue.

THE conſtitution of man is moral; he is naturally poſſeſſed of ſentiments, affections, and other inſtinctive principles, which immediately point out the path of virtue, and prompt him to to purſue it.

HOWEVER, if we give but the ſlighteſt attention to the preſent circumſtances of human nature; if we conſider the various objects, with which men are differently affected, and the ſtrength of thoſe paſſions, which often oppoſe the influence of virtue; it muſt appear evident,

that theſe mere inſtinctive principles, are not ſufficient to produce that ſtrength and conſtancy, which are eſſential to our idea of virtue. This muſt be the effect of reflexion, and of the exerciſe of the intellectual faculty.

AND this effect muſt entirely depend upon the opinion we form of the nature and conſtitution of things.

IF we ſuppoſe this world a fatherleſs univerſe, without any principle of order or deſign, to lead the underſtanding, or affect the heart; nothing can be more fatal to virtue, than ſuch a gloomy repreſentation of things. For in this caſe, the connexions of mankind are broken, their intereſts little affecting, and the motives of purſuing theſe intereſts, reſolve into mere immediate ſelfiſhneſs.

THE Epicureans, when they excluded from the univerſe, the care of Divine Providence, at the ſame time, baniſhed every generous concern for others. They profeſſed no other end, but their their own immediate eaſe aud gratification; they therefore thought it very fooliſh to burden themſelves with the affairs of others, and were ſatisfied with keeping merely fair appearances with them, as a thing neceſſary for their own ſakes.

THUS

THUS the principles of impiety ſpread a gloom over the mind, bring a languor upon the ſocial affections, and damp and diſcourage all the immediate principles of virtue.

THOSE principles are the gift of heaven, and it is only in the light of religion, that their propriety and excellence can be diſcovered. It is the perſuaſion of a better ſyſtem, that alone can unite ſocial and ſelf-love in the firmeſt manner, and can make our own happineſs chiefly depend upon a zealous purſuit of the intereſts of others.

HEREBY the inſtinctive principles of virtue, muſt receive the greateſt improvement, and we cannot contemplate that admirable plan, which wiſdom and goodneſs has eſtabliſhed, without catching thoſe noble and generous ſentiments which it naturally inſpires.

The antipathy betwixt atheiſm and virtue, is repreſented by Lord Shafteſbury, in his inquiry, in a manner equally juſt and elegant. "An "atheiſtical belief, ſays his Lordſhip, muſt tend "to the weaning the affections from any thing "amiable or ſelf-worthy, and to ſuppreſſing the "very habit and familiar cuſtom of admiring "natural beauties, or whatever, in the order "of things, is according to juſt deſign, harmo-"ny, and proportion. For how little diſpoſed "muſt a perſon be, to love and admire any

"thing

"thing as orderly in the univerſe, who thinks "the univerſe itſelf a pattern of diſorder? How "unapt to reverence or reſpect any ſubordinate "beauty of a part, when even the whole itſelf "is thought to want perfection, and to be only "a waſte and infinite deformity?"

AND this noble Author thus concludes. "Hence we may determine juſtly, the relation "which virtue has to piety, the firſt being not "compleat but in the latter, ſince where the "latter is wanting, there can neither be the "ſame benignity, firmneſs, or conſtancy; the "ſame good compoſure of the affections, or uni-"formity of mind." On the other hand, Seneca *de vita beata*, places the happy influence of the oppoſite perſuaſion, in the following point of light. "We are born under a regular admi-"niſtration; to obey God, is true liberty. "The dictates of conſcience, and not the o-"pinions of Authors, ſhall form the rules of "my conduct. Conſidering the world as my "country, and perſuaded that the all ruling, and "ever-preſent gods are the witneſſes and judges "of every part of my behaviour, it ſhall be my "chief concern to make the greateſt improve-"ment in every kind of virtue. The perſon "who acts properly under the influence of

"theſe

"these noble principles, must make good his "way to heaven at last."

BUT there is another matter still, which greatly merits our careful attention, and that is, a sense of duty and obligation. No sentiments are more natural, or more universally acknowledged, than those of duty and obligation. These sentiments seem to have their original foundation in the principle of conscience, but cannot receive their full meaning, and proper effect, unless we consider them in reference to a moral government of the world.

CONSCIENCE is indeed a very extraordinary principle, and of powerful energy. It seems planted in the human breast, to secure the order of society, and to guard the rights of others. In some respects it appears even superior to the principle of self-love. For, if we should wilfully forego some small interest of our own, that principle would not create great uneasiness; but, if we should, in the same manner, cause a like damage to another; this would occasion a severe remorse. Conscience is often the source of the bitterest anguish, and most painful apprehension of merited punishment; and in these effects we may discern the hand of the wise Creator, as we would not willingly bring upon ourselves so great distress.

diſtreſs. Conſcience ſeems alſo to operate in this manner immediately, and without much reflection. At the ſame time, it muſt appear evident, that if this principle is not ſupported, by thoſe juſt reflections to which it naturally leads, it will never anſwer the deſign of its appointment, nor create a proper obligation. For conſcience is not of equal ſtrength in different perſons; it may be alſo weakened, or totally ſilenced by bad principles, and vicious habits. Yet ſurely it never will be allowed, that theſe men who have thus wilfully ſubverted a principle of ſo great importance, have thereby totally diſſolved their obligation to duty.

WE muſt therefore conſider conſcience, not as an idle bugbear, alarming us with the apprehenſion of ills which never ſhall befal us, but as a faithful monitor, truly intimating the bad conſequences which muſt attend an obſtinacy in vice. It has a plain reference to a divine moral government, which never can properly conſult the general good, but by diſtributing happineſs and miſery, according to the true proportions of virtue and vice.

THIS fundamental principle of moral government, appears to Plato in ſo ſtrong a light, that he expreſſes his perſuaſion of the truth of it, with a degree of aſſurance, which he ſeldom aſ-

ſumes.

ſumes. Know, young man, ſays he, in his tenth book of laws, that this judgment of the gods, is fixed by ſuch an irreverſible decree, that it is impoſſible for you to avoid it, altho' you could take wings and fly up to heaven, or was able to deſcend into the deepeſt caverns of the earth.

THE obligation to juſtice, is more ſpecific and determined, than perhaps that to any other virtue, and is acknowledged to be equal upon all. This obligation, however, cannot be founded merely in the original feelings of conſcience, for the reaſons above mentioned; but if we ſhall include its relation to a divine authority, then the the obligation muſt appear equal and perfect with regard to all mankind.

THUS conſcience is enabled to maintain its important character; and by being conſidered as the vicegerent of heaven, becomes truly awful and reſpectable.

BUT, if we diſſolve the ſyſtem, and dethrone the Deity, it will be impoſſible to give any rational account of obligation, which includes the idea of a ſuperior, who lays it upon us, for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes. Ingenious men indeed, may embraſs the ſubject, or divert the attention, by a ſpecious and artful ſophiſtry, of which others may become eaſy dupes from prejudice or weakneſs. But if reaſon is faithful to its

its charge, it will be able to diſengage the truth, from all the labyrinths in which it may be involved, and bring it into the cleareſt and moſt convincing light.

OUR Author, indeed, upon this occaſion, talks of an inward conſciouſneſs of integrity, and a peaceful reflexion upon one's own conduct, as ſufficient to ſupport the obligation to juſtice.

BUT this is borrowing language from a ſyſtem which is entirely excluded; for if there is no real order in nature, no wiſe deſign at all regularly carried on, no conſcious ſuperior mind, to whom we can appeal for the innocence and integrity of our conduct, no peculiar rewards appointed for virtue, which often throws away every preſent advantage; upon this ſuppoſition, what can the conſciouſneſs of virtue mean? nay what is virtue itſelf, in a world ſuppoſed to be but a mere jumble of precarious and accidental beings?

VIRTUE has commonly the advantage of vice, in every reſpect, but, upon ſome occaſions, it is quite the reverſe.

THE atchievements of virtue, in certain circumſtances, meet with dangers, difficulties, and often with complicated ills. Yet, in theſe circumſtances, it is ſufficiently ſupported, whilſt we reflect, that tho' the path is immediately rugged

and

and uneaſy, yet it will lead us to true happineſs at laſt; and that, in the mean time, we act our part, under the eye and protection of that ſupreme Being, who will not neglect our real intereſt, when we ourſelves renounce every preſent advantage, in order to maintain a generous fealty to his wiſe and righteous government.

BUT if we ſhall exclude all theſe animating motives which religion exhibits, how could we ruſh upon preſent ills, without the leaſt hope of a recompence, or equivalent? Such conduct could not be virtue; it would be folly, as it would be diametrically oppoſite to ſelf-love, or the deſire of happineſs, an eſſential and unalterable principle in the human mind.

FROM the foregoing ſhort obſervations, the indiſſoluble connexion betwixt religion and virtue muſt appear in the cleareſt light.

WE ſhall conclude with juſt mentioning ſome of thoſe illuſtrious characters, which have been conſtantly aſcribed to virtue, not only by the moderns, but by the wiſeſt of the ancients; the propriety of which will appear evident from our former reaſonings.

VIRTUE has ever been conſidered as a rational and enlightened principle; it is indeed rooted in the heart; but it receives its proper ſtrength,

and becomes a firm and ſteddy principle, chiefly by means of the faculty of intelligence and reflection.

THIS faculty, naturally communicates to it, vigour and energy, derived from motives the moſt important and intereſting. Thus virtue is rendered a noble and illuſtrious principle, deſtined to take the command of life, and qualified to controul the ſtrongeſt paſſions, and overcome the greateſt difficulties.

HENCE, in every point of light, its excellence is conſpicuous.

IT is compliance with the will of heaven, and ſubmiſſion to the great order of the world.

IT is the rectitude of all the powers of the mind, applied to the nobleſt purpoſes and purſuits.

IT is the proper ſource, the deſigning and active cauſe of good, upon the improvement and perfection of which, the happineſs of the rational ſyſtem abſolutely depends.

IN conſequence of all this, virtue muſt naturally excite the love and eſteem of mankind, and even engage the approbation and regard of the Deity himſelf.

VIRTUE

VIRTUE is therefore eminently diſtinguiſhed from every other object or quality whatever, and muſt appear to be the greateſt good, not only of the ſyſtem, but even of each individual; and the reverſe of all that has been ſaid, muſt, with equal reaſon, be as certainly affirmed concerning vice.

APPENDIX.

Concerning the office of reaſon in morals, and the ſuperiority of that principle to ſentiment.

VIRTUE in former ages of the world, has ever been conſidered as an object of the underſtanding, and all who have allowed the moral diſtinctions, have, at the ſame time, agreed to beſtow the epithet of *rational* upon a virtuous conduct.

THE ſubtile ſpeculations of the preſent age, have produced a different opinion, and many ingenious writers have been induced to conſider virtue as the mere offspring of ſentiment, not founded in the unalterable nature of things; and therefore very improperly referred to the intellectual faculty.

IT is the moral ſenſe, (ſay they), which alone can diſcover virtue; upon this inſtinctive principle its nature entirely depends; this ſenſe is the ſole judge of morals, in the ſame manner as the external ſenſes are the ſole judges of their particular objects.

WE muſt indeed allow to theſe writers, the merit of having examined with great accuracy, the

the various ſentiments and affections of the human heart, and of having unfolded their admirable conſtruction and deſign.

AND perhaps the diſcoveries which they have happily made, may have tempted them to lay too great ſtreſs upon this part of the human conſtitution.

BUT whatever may have given riſe to this new opinion in philoſophy, 'tis hoped there will be little difficulty in proving it to be extremely erroneous. This indeed might ſufficiently appear from what has formerly been ſaid; but in reſpect of the authority of thoſe who have embraced it, it may merit ſome further examination. It will not however be neceſſary to enter into any abſtract reaſoning, or to follow the learned writers, with whom we have the preſent diſpute thro' all their ingenious ſubtilties. A few principles, plain and inconteſtible, may be ſufficient to produce the fulleſt conviction, and to enable us to detect the fallacy of the arguments advanced in the contrary.

As our preſent inquiry, regards a remarkable quality of virtue, on account of which it is denominated rational, the argument cannot be carried on with perſpicuity and preciſion, without having ſome idea of that which is the proper ſubject of our reaſoning.

FOR this purpoſe indeed, it is not propoſed to form a juſt definition of virtue; it may be ſufficient to fix upon ſome property of it, which is, and muſt be univerſally acknowledged.

NEITHER is it neceſſary to enter into a minute explication of the diſtinction betwixt private and ſocial virtue; the firſt is beſt underſtood by its relation to the laſt, which, at any rate, muſt be allowed to be of the greateſt importance.

WE can hardly think upon ſocial virtue, but it muſt immediately occur to us, that it is a principle which leads to the good of others, which tends to maintain the order, and promote the happineſs of ſociety.

IF this propoſition is true, that virtue is a principle which leads to the good of ſociety, the preſent diſpute ſeems to be brought to an immediate iſſue; for we have now diſcovered an unerring ſtandard; by referring to which, reaſon is able to judge with certainty of the ſentiments, affections, and conſequent actions, and to determine their moral quality.

THUS we cannot heſitate to pronounce humanity to be a virtuous principle, and cruelty to be a vicious one.

To prevent miſtakes, however, in this matter, it may be proper to obſerve, that tho', in certain circumſtances, ſome acts of virtue may prove immediately hurtful; yet its remote influence, will ſtill reach the greater good of the whole. An act of juſtice, for example, may ſometimes be immediately hurtful to ourſelves, or even to our country, but it muſt ſtill be performed; for the general intereſt of ſociety requires this, to which we muſt ſacrifice a preſent good, relating to ourſelves, or even to our country.

BUT to proceed, it may ſeem indeed ſuperfluous, to prove, that a tendency to the good of ſociety, is an invariable and eſſential characteriſtic of virtue. The truth of this, is confirmed by univerſal conſent. Virtue ever denotes ſomething good in itſelf, and ſocial virtue muſt mean what tends to the good of ſociety.

WE ſhall, however, beſtow ſome illuſtrations upon this important truth, by comparing it with the moſt eſſential principles of human nature, and the general conſtitution of the ſyſtem.

SELF-LOVE, or a deſire of happineſs, is eſſential to human nature, and indeed to every nature endued with ſenſe and intelligence. Pleaſure and delight are included in the very idea of happineſs; it would therefore be a palpable contradiction, to ſuppoſe us not pleaſed with that, which

which is the proper and true ſource of pleaſure.

FROM this it alſo follows, by a neceſſary conſequence, that we muſt ever prefer a greater to a leſſer degree of happineſs.

LET us then conſider man as placed in a ſtate of natural ſociety, that is, as united in ſuch a manner, as that the conduct of individuals affects the intereſts of others, and may be the cauſe either of happineſs or miſery to thoſe who are placed within their ſphere of action. That ſtate of ſociety muſt be beſt in itſelf, that is, productive of the greateſt quantity of happineſs, in which the conduct of the ſeveral members, uniformly tends to promote the intereſt of their aſſociates. Every member of the ſociety, as ſuch, muſt approve of this conduct; and that, in conſequence of the eſſential principle of ſelf-love; otherwiſe, his mind muſt be in ſome irregular and diſorderly ſtate, contrary to nature.

BUT further, if we extend our views beyond the human ſyſtem, and conſider the general nature of things, particularly, if we reflect, that the whole is, and muſt under the care and direction of a ſupreme Governor, in whom goodneſs is an eſſential perfection, and who therefore muſt approve of virtue as the true ſource of ſocial good; we muſt alſo here diſcover the nature

ture of virtue to be eſtabliſhed upon an eternal and invariable foundation.

IT is unneceſſary to enlarge upon principles, in themſelves ſo clear; they all concur to eſtabliſh this unqueſtionable concluſion, that a tendency to ſocial good, is an eſſential characteriſtic of virtue.

BY means of this characteriſtic, reaſon is enabled to form a true judgment of virtue, without the aid of ſentiment, and even to determine when the ſentiments themſelves are vicious, which they always muſt be, whenever they lead to, or approve of cruelty and injuſtice.

UPON this occaſion, it may not be improper to obſerve, that the approbation of others, even the general approbation of mankind, is a ſtandard of virtue not entirely to be depended upon.

THE ſentiments of men, are, or may be corrupted; this corruption, from a concurrence of circumſtances, may become very general; in which caſe, the opinion we form of other men's actions, will probably be very erroneous, and not agreeable to what is the true and natural good of ſociety.

INDEED, what commonly leads men out of the path of virtue, is an irregular ſelf-love; but this

this principle does not commonly influence us, when we judge of the actions of others; and therefore, great ſtreſs is juſtly enough laid upon our approbation of ſuch actions. But ſuch approbation, tho' it may amount to a certain degree of evidence; yet, in reſpect of the poſſible diſorder and depravity of the ſentiments, it never can produce a full conviction. We muſt further carefully attend to the real influence, which any particular action has upon the happineſs of ſociety.

THUS, however any particular perſon, or even any number of men, may approve of, or be pleaſed with a cruel or unjuſt action, yet it muſt certainly be pronounced vicious or bad, in reſpect of its natural bad tendency.

FROM the preceeding reaſonings, it muſt now appear evident, that moral goodneſs has a neceſſary relation to natural good, and that it is an eſſential characteriſtic of virtue, to be the proper ſource and eſſential cauſe of happineſs. Virtue thus becomes a proper object of reaſon, and the intellectual faculty can eaſily judge of it, by comparing it with the characters which have been conſidered.

BUT we muſt ſtill proceed a ſtep further, and regard virtue in a different light; for virtue not only denotes the good tendency of our actions, but

but includes alſo the principle from which they flow. It is not ſufficient to render an action really virtuous, that it has a proper tendency to the good of ſociety; it muſt alſo flow from ſuch an internal principle, as is apt to produce an uniform and regular good conduct.

IF we do good only caſually, or from a principle, which, in different circumſtances, would lead to a contrary conduct, we never can be denominated virtuous.

THE internal frame and diſpoſition of mind, from which our conduct proceeds, muſt therefore make an eſſential part of the true idea of virtue.

BUT before we enter upon any farther explication of the internal principle of virtue, we may venture to lay down the following rule, whereby the moral goodneſs of ſuch principle may be eſtimated with abundance of certainty, *viz.* that the principle which leads in the moſt regular and effectual manner, to the proper object of virtue or the good of ſociety, is, for that reaſon, beſt in itſelf. As this rule will be of great uſe in our after-reaſoning, ſo the truth of it cannot be conteſted. For if virtue be the means of good, and thoſe means are always beſt which moſt effectually accompliſh the end propoſed, then that muſt be the greateſt virtue, which

which is beſt calculated to produce its peculiarly excellent object.

BUT to proceed; it has already been ſhown, that, in conſequence of the eſſential principle of ſelf-love, we muſt be ſenſible, that the good of ſociety, is an object which muſt be agreeable to every member of the ſociety as ſuch, and muſt alſo be approven of by an all-perfect Governor, and therefore muſt be the proper object of virtue.

YET, however ſelf-love may thus enable us to aſcertain the proper object of virtue, it is not merely in itſelf, calculated to eſtabliſh the principle of virtue in the heart, becauſe the objects of theſe are very different; the object of the firſt, is private good; the object of the other, is ſocial or public good. And though theſe objects may very often coincide, yet they may alſo interfere with one another, and draw different ways, which may prove fatal to virtue.

WE ſhall proceed then, to take a general view of theſe principles, which enter into the compoſition of virtue. And theſe are, either immediate affection, or the reflex influence of ſelf-love. For we act only, as we are engaged by the immediate agreeableneſs of the object of our purſuit, or from a ſenſe of ſome ſubſequent benefit or advantage.

THE

THE firſt of theſe motives of action, depends upon the ſtructure and fabric of the mind, and is liable to all the variations to which that is obnoxious.

THE other, chiefly relates to the external order, and conſtitution of things, and muſt operate very differently, according to the different opinion which we form of theſe.

THE ſtrength of the one is founded in the inward rectitude of the heart, as that of the other, ariſes from a firm perſuaſion of a wiſe and good conſtitution of nature; and it muſt be evident, that the moſt powerful principle of action, reſults from a juſt coalition of both.

BUT it is objected to this theory, that it blends ſelf-love, and ſocial affection, and thereby robs virtue of a very noble and eſſential quality, which is univerſally aſcribed to it, *viz.* that of diſintereſtedneſs.

IT will therefore be neceſſary to conſider the nature of this quality, with ſome proper attention.

DISINTERESTEDNESS, then, is a quality, not peculiar to benevolence, but which belongs to every affection whatever. It is the immediate tendency of the heart, to ſome object naturally agreeable to it, and which does not ariſe from further views of any ſeparate intereſt.

THUS, as ſocial good, is the natural object of benevolence, ſo is glory, that of ambition. There does not ſeem, therefore, to be any peculiar excellence, in a quality common to every affection; ſuch excellence can only ariſe from the goodneſs of the object itſelf; nay, if the object is bad, the quality of diſintereſtedneſs renders the affection ſo much the worſe. Thus, nothing can be more odious than a diſintereſted malice, a malice, which can be of no manner of uſe to the perſon who indulges it.

BUT what, it will be ſaid, can more naturally enter into the praiſes of any action, than, that it is generous and diſintereſted? Do not our hearts readily join in this applauſe, and feel the juſtneſs of the encomium? This is indeed true, but not difficult to be accounted for.

WHEN we paſs judgment upon the moral quality of any action, we aſcend to its ſource, and conſider the motive whence it proceeded. If the action proceeded from good affection, we pronounce it good, becauſe ſuch affection naturally and in itſelf leads to good. But if the action ſhall appear to flow from a motive, which does not naturally lead to good, for example, if it flows from a bribe, we acknowledge no moral goodneſs in it, becauſe it took place only by accident,

and

and in other circumſtances, the ſame motive would have led to the contrary bad action.

BUT let us ſuppoſe the intereſt which binds us to virtue, to be of that ſort, as conſtantly and invariably to produce this effect; a motive of good conduct, ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, muſt appear to be a matter of the greateſt importance. Can we blame that principle, which does good to others, becauſe, at the ſame time, it beſtows happineſs upon the agent?

THE ſtrength and firmneſs of virtue, depends upon its intimate union with ſelf-love; if this union was to be diſſolved, and happineſs ſhould point one road, and virtue another, we would certainly purſue the firſt, and forſake the laſt.

BUT to ſet this matter ſtill in a clearer light, let us take a general view of the ſeveral principles of action in human nature, and compare them together.

IT may then be obſerved, that there are ſome principles, that lead us to certain ends and objects, without our knowing why, and without any ſenſible degree of pleaſure artending them. Theſe may be denominated pure inſtincts, and though, of all principles, they are the moſt diſintereſted, yet in them we acknowledge no peculiar merit.

BUT there are other principles leading to good, which are attended with a very ſenſible degree of pleaſure, ſuch as are our kind affections; theſe we approve of, and that even in reſpect of their diſintereſtedneſs, though it is evident, that albeit they are not excited from remoter reflexions of ſelf-love, yet they contain in themſelves an immediate intereſt and preſent ſatisfaction, upon which the life and energy of their operation chiefly depends.

THEIR merit and worth ſeems, therefore, in a great meaſure, to ariſe from this circumſtance, that we are able to eſtabliſh them into conſtant and habitual principles of action, and that even by reflection upon that immediate pleaſure which they carry along with them. It is in this manner, that Ariſtotle reconciles with the principle of ſelf-love, thoſe arduous virtues which ſeem to imply the greateſt degree of ſelf-denial, ſuch as dying for one's country,

He ſuppoſes, that the immediate pleaſure, which attends ſuch a noble reſolution, is more than ſufficient, to counter-balance all the ſuffering to which we voluntarily expoſe ourſelves.

BUT there is a third ſort of principles, which do not operate immediately, but are the reſult of more leiſurely reflexions of ſelf-love. Theſe and with ſome degree of diſparagement, are called intereſted

intereſted, in oppoſition to the affections, tho' the intereſt of theſe is remote, and that of the affections is immediate. The goodneſs of theſe principles, as has already been obſerved, depends upon the nature of that intereſt in which they are founded; if that is invariably connected with the practice of virtue, the happieſt effects muſt take place. Thus, if either we conſider virtue, as in itſelf, our chief good, or at leaſt the neceſſary means to obtain that great end, in either of theſe views, we muſt diſcover the firmeſt foundation of virtue to be eſtabliſhed. Immediate good affection, is indeed an excellent and an amiable quality, but it has not ſufficient ſtrength and conſtancy, ſteadily to purſue its object; it is frequently ſupplanted by bad paſſions, in which caſe, the character and conduct muſt be, and often is, very vicious and irregular. It is neceſſary, therefore, to engage ſelf-love, in the ſame intereſt with affection. Theſe principles, though different, are not unfriendly to one another.

If the one is accounted virtuous, from its immediate tendency to ſocial good, the other muſt be deemed no leſs ſo, from purſuing the ſame end, with much greater ſtrength and conſtancy. From the union of both, the principle of virtue will be rendered compleat, and the ſolidity and firmneſs communicated by the one, will receive

all the pleaſing characters of beauty, lovelineſs, and dignity from the other.

DR Hutcheſon, in laying ſo great ſtreſs upon diſintereſted benevolence, cannot fail to meet with an unſurmountable difficulty, in explaining the human conſtitution.

MUST we ſupppoſe, ſays he, † that the principles of virtue and ſelf-love are two ultimate principles in the human mind, which may draw different ways, without any umpire to reconcile their differences? To remove this difficulty, he affirms (but without aſſigning any reaſon, other than the authority of the moral ſenſe), that the virtuous determination is the ſupreme principle, and naturally deſtined to take the command; that, conſequently, in the competition ſuppoſed, the moral faculty recommends the glorious, the amiable part, which therefore ſhould prevail over any ſuggeſtion of ſelf-love. Theſe appear to be very bold aſſertions, ſupported only by the authority of what is called the moral ſenſe. But how can the authority of this ſenſe, which is of a merely inſtinctive nature, ſet aſide the importance of that principle, which, (as has been demonſtrated) is eſſentially and unalterably founded in nature? Of this, the ancient philoſophers were ſo ſenſible,

† Moral ſyſtem, cap. 3. & 4.

ſible, that none of them, not even the Stoicks, ever pretended to ſupport virtue, but in the view of its being our chief good, or the ſource of our trueſt happineſs upon the whole. Upon this ſuppoſition, all the exhortations to the practice of virtue, are, and only can be founded. Of this Lord Shafteſbury himſelf affords a proof, as he can only recommend svirtue upon the very ſame topick. But it is unneceſſaryto enlarge upon an argument, ſo clear in itſelf, and ſo univerſallyacknowledged.

SELF-LOVE, therefore, muſt be recognized as the ſupreme principle in human nature. But, at the ſame time, it muſt be allowed, that this principle cannot in itſelf be the proper ſource of virtue, which leads, not to private, but public good. Virtue muſt, however, be perfectly united with ſelf-love, and ſupported by all the efficacy and ſtrength of that principle; and this important effect muſt entirely depend upon the wiſe conſtitution of nature. If that makes virtue our true intereſt; if we reflect, we will follow virtue; but if our real happineſs is placed any where elſe, we will forſake virtue, and purſue that commanding object.

IN our preſent theory, therefore, it is by no means indifferent, whether we ſuppoſe a God and a Providence or not; a religious ſyſtem muſt appear altogether eſſential to the eſtabliſhment of virtue. There muſt be a general order of nature,

ture, otherwiſe it will be vain to ſearch for the particular order of the human mind. And ſuch an admirable ſyſtem as invariably conſtitutes one and the ſame end to ſocial and ſelf-affection, can only be the effect of perfect wiſdom and goodneſs.

THE preſent intereſts of virtue, ariſing from ſentiment or external advantage, although very conſiderable, are yet by no means ſufficient fully to ſupport it. Sentiment and affection often vary, and, in the viciſſitude of human affairs, many untoward circumſtances occur, in which virtue will not appear eligible. This will not only lead us, in many inſtances, to abandon virtue, but will alſo be attended with a general bad conſequence; for it will diſpoſe the mind to make a cautious calculation of the profit and loſs, to be placed to the accompt of virtue, and to ſuſpend all the meaſures of conduct, upon the iſſue of ſuch a calculation. In this caſe, virtue will not be a firm and unſhaken principle as it ought, but it muſt appear precarious and uncertain, ſometimes to be followed, and at other times to be forſaken. Thus, virtue will be deprived of that ſtrength and conſtancy, which are its eſſential characteriſtics, and upon which its true worth and excellence entirely depend.

IN order, therefore, to eſtabliſh the intereſts of virtue, upon a firm and an invariable foundation, we

we muſt neceſſarily have recourſe to a divine moral government. In this caſe, we muſt have a firm and conſtaut perſuaſion, that virtue is always our trueſt intereſt upon the whole. This will lead us to eſtabliſh it in our minds, as a principle of conduct, never to be deſerted, upon any pretence whatever; and this alone is true virtue. For the man who obſerves a moral conduct only, when his particular intereſt leads him to it, but in other caſes purſues vice, can never be denominated virtuous. This character can only belong to him, who, as Perſius beautifully expreſſes it, has

Compoſitum jus fasque animo, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, et incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto.

WE have formerly ſhown, that virtue is an object diſcoverable by reaſon, but that the practice of it depends upon certain motives of good. In conſequence of this, the man who conſtantly adheres to virtue, has good reaſon to expect the favour, aſſiſtance and protection of the Deity; whereas, the perſon who abandons himſelf to vice and wickedneſs, has equal reaſon to apprehend the divine vengeance.

THIS connexion betwixt religion and morality, the mind of man is not able to break. The Epicureans themſelves could not diſſemble it, and

were

were therefore tempted to turn ſome appearances in the contrary into an argument againſt religion itſelf.

THUS Lucretius denies the Divine Providence, becauſe the thunderbolt ſometimes paſſes by the guilty, and breaks upon the head of the innocent.

Fulminat, immittens telum, quod ſaepe nocentes
Praeterit, exanimatque indignos, inque merentes.

THE intereſt of virtue, is therefore founded in the very nature of a wiſe and good conſtitution, and happineſs or miſery muſt, by an invariable law, of divine moral government, be appropriated to the ſhare of virtue or vice.

As nothing in ſpeculation, can be more certain than this, ſo we have real proofs and ſpecimens of it, in fact and experience. That principle of conſcience which has already been conſidered, and which is ſo ſtrongly interwoven in the heart of man, is a remarkable ſpecimen of an immediate government of God. This principle is the awful vicegerent of the ſupreme Ruler of the world; it immediately beſtows rewards, or inflicts puniſhments; and if theſe puniſhments fail to have their proper effect, they naturally lead the mind into an apprehenſion, that puniſhments, ſtill more grievous, will certainly overtake us.

IT

IT appears impoſſible properly to explain our ideas of duty and obligation, without taking into our view the authority of a Supreme Being, upon whom we abſolutely depend. No ideas are more common, or more univerſally acknowledged, than thoſe of duty and obligation; ſo that they ſeem to ariſe from natural ſentiments and impreſſions upon the mind of man; and theſe impreſſions evidently include the ſenſe of a ſuperior, by whoſe authority, for juſt reaſons, a particular conduct, is required of us.

DUTY does not merely denote the fitneſs of an action, but alſo a neceſſity of performing it, ariſing from the authority of a ſuperior interpoſed for that effect.

THIS will clearly appear, if we ſhould apply theſe ideas to the Supreme Being. We can ſay properly, that a certain conduct is fit for the Deity, in reſpect of his moral perfections; but if we ſhould ſay, that it was God's duty, to act in any particular manner, the impropriety and abſurdity of ſuch an expreſſion would be immediately perceived by the moſt ſtupid and thoughtleſs. This muſt appear an irrefragable proof of the neceſſary relation, which duty bears to the authority of a ſuperior.

BUT

BUT it ſeems unneceſſary to purſue this general argument any further, as from the whole preceeding reaſonings, it muſt appear evident, that the juſt motives of virtue, can only be founded in religion, and that the duty we owe to others, derives its proper obligation from the duty we owe to God. All attempts to eſtabliſh virtue upon any other foundation, will appear fruitleſs and vain; and if theſe philoſophers who keep religion entirely out of their ſcheme, would but conſider the true nature of virtue, and the ſtrength and extent of its obligation, they themſelves would ſoon be convinced of their miſtake. An Atheiſt indeed may, from ſentiment, temper, or common prudence, often maintain a ſpecious ſhew of virtue; but it has been already ſhown that the dignity, firmneſs and conſtancy of this principle, can never be eſtabliſted upon ſuch qualities; and numberleſs caſes might be mentioned, in which it would be downright folly for a perſon of Epicurean principles, to adhere to virtue.

FROM the obſervations hitherto made, it muſt appear evident, that reaſon is the faculty, which diſcovers the nature of virtue, and alſo judges of the ſtrength and propriety of thoſe motives and principles which lead to the practice of it.

HAVING chiefly conſidered the motives of virtue, which are founded in the wiſe conſtitution

tion of things, and the nature of a divine moral government, we ſhall further make a few general remarks upon thoſe principles which are of a more immediate and inſtinctive nature.

THE human mind has a moral conſtitution; it is furniſhed with ſuch principles, as naturally prompt us to the practice of virtue. We ſhall only obſerve, that humanity, ſympathy and conſcience are remarkably of this ſort, and the laſt of theſe ſeems even to have naturally a greater authority than any paſſions or principles of a contrary tendency. Thoſe principles are indeed diſtinct from reaſon, but yet, they are the objects of that faculty which can reflect upon them, and make a true eſtimate of their juſtneſs and propriety. In the ſame manner, reaſon can contemplate patriotiſm, friendſhip, filial and parental love, and other affections of a more limited nature, and by comparing them with one another, and with the common ſtandard of virtue, can diſcover their true moral goodneſs. Thus it is, that reaſon judges of every inſtinctive principle whatever, and determines, in what reſpect it is to be pronounced virtuous or otherwiſe. We cannot even except the moral ſenſe itſelf, which is undoubtedly an object of the reflecting faculty.

IT may be further obſerved, that reaſon cannot only directly contemplate theſe inſtinctive principles, and thereby pronounce a true judg-

ment upon them. It can alſo remedy their defects and diſorders, not indeed immediately, but by means of ſuperior motives, derived from a more extenſive view of the ſyſtem.

IT muſt indeed be allowed, that the inſtinctive principles of our nature, are of the greateſt uſe in morals, as they engage us to action in a quick and powerful manner; but then, the regularity and juſtneſs of their influence, entirely depends upon the intellectual faculty, to which they are naturally ſubordinate.

THESE principles have another remarkable advantage, that they immediately preſent their reſpective objects to the mind, which thus naturally reflects upon them, without any particular exertion of thought: hereby the principles of morals are rendered common and univerſal, and the peaſant as well as the philoſopher may apprehend them, and if freer of prejudices, he will more readily yield to their influence.

UPON this occaſion it may be obſerved, that the idea of virtue, which Lord Shafteſbury exhibits, is manifeſtly imperfect: he indeed, in order to diſtinguiſh the human from the brute ſpecies, admits into that idea, a reflex approbation of the original principles of virtue; but then, he confines this reflexion, to theſe principles themſelves,

without

without including their connexions and conſequences. Now, it muſt appear evident, that ſuch reflexion, tho' never ſo juſt, adds no new quality to theſe principles, but only diſcovers them as they appear in their ſimple and natural ſtate, juſt as a mirror reflects the image of any object placed before it; and with whatever degree of ſentiment this reflection may be ſuppoſed to be attended, yet ſuch ſentiment can never riſe higher than its original ſource, or prove more powerful than the cauſe upon which it depends; ſo that, by this means, the principle of virtue can receive no additional ſtrength.

To gain this neceſſary effect, we muſt enlarge our reflections, and conſider the original principles of virtue in their relation to a ſyſtem; and as the true ſources of that univerſal happineſs, with which the happineſs of the agent is eſſentially connected by means of that invariable law of moral government, which the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Deity have eſtabliſhed. And to theſe more important and extenſive reflections, the original principles of virtue, particularly that of conſcience, naturally lead.

HENCE it may be obſerved, that the connexion betwixt religion and morality, has been univerſally felt and acknowledged; a connexion, which, tho' ſometimes attempted to be unhinged

by the metaphyſical ſubtilties of a few preſuming philoſophers, yet never could be broke by the vulgar, except ſuch as have been ſunk in ſtupidity, or totally depraved.

IF we reflect with the leaſt attention upon the foregoing principles and concluſions, one ſhould imagine it to be altogether unneceſſary to beſtow any further reaſoning to prove, that virtue has an unalterable foundation in nature, and is conſequently a proper object of the intellectual faculty. But ſince writers of great reputation, have lately eſpouſed a contrary opinion, and alſo contend, that it is eſtabliſhed by the cleareſt demonſtration, it may not be improper to make a very few remarks upon what has been ſaid by them in ſupport of ſuch opinion.

DR HUTCHESON has beſtowed a great deal of ſubtile reaſoning upon this ſubject, particularly in his illuſtrations upon the moral ſenſe. But if we will attend to what he ſays, in the firſt ſection of theſe illuſtrations, he will appear to be greatly embarraſſed. His opinion ſeems plainly to be, that the moral ſenſe, and not reaſon, is the ſole judge of moral goodneſs; and that, in the preſent conſtitution of that ſenſe, it approves of benevolence, which is therefore morally good; but that, in a contrary conſtitution, it would approve of malice, which therefore,

therefore, in ſuch caſe, according to his reaſoning, would, by an unavoidable conſequence, be conſidered as morally good.

THE Doctor, indeed, will not allow the quality of moral goodneſs, to be applicable to the moral ſenſe, becauſe that ſenſe is the judge of ſuch quality. But whatever be in this, nothing can be more plain, than that reaſon muſt condemn both the moral ſenſe when depraved, and every bad diſpoſition approven of by ſuch ſenſe, as the ſource of ill, diſorder and diſtreſs to mankind, and contrary to the unalterable, and eſſential principle of ſelf love.

WHY malice and injuſtice, if approven of by the moral ſenſe, ſhould acquire the name of moral goodneſs, it will be hard to ſay; but this is certain, that every perſon, who allows himſelf to think, muſt wiſh ſuch moral goodneſs for ever to be excluded from human ſociety.

BUT we ſhall proceed to mention another writer, who, like the Doctor, appears to be a real and a warm friend to virtue, and alſo ſeems entirely to eſpouſe his opinion.

THE ingenious Author of Elements of criticiſm, where he conſiders the ſtandard of taſte, plainly puts the taſte for morals, upon the ſame foot with the taſte for the fine arts, and he

makes both equally to depend upon the ſame principle. But this is confounding things totally different. For the only thing to be conſidered in the fine arts, is the pleaſure they afford us; and this depends entirely upon the conſtitution and ſtate of our internal ſenſes; according to the particular conſtitution of theſe, the fine arts may excite different degrees of pleaſure in different perſons. Nor is this attended with any bad conſequence. For the objects of taſte themſelves, being inanimate, and incapable of pleaſure or pain, are entirely out of the queſtion, and cannot at all be affected by our particular ſentiments.

BUT the caſe is very different with regard to virtue; the chief merit and excellence of this principle, ariſes from its being the ſource of happineſs to others; and the pleaſure which we ourſelves receive from a virtuous conduct, is only a ſecondary conſideration. Upon this account, virtue is called generous, and diſintereſted; and the ſentimental writers themſelves, lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon this quality of it. We muſt therefore form our judgment of virtue, from the public good which an action tends to produce, and not from the private pleaſure which excites to action. Nay, this private pleaſure or taſte, we muſt pronounce virtuous or vi-

cious

cious, according as we discover its particular tendency.

THUS we justly condemn whatever pleasure a man may take in doing a cruel action. Taste is therefore not the cause of virtue, but rather an effect of it. Virtue is built upon a more solid foundation. The idea which Cicero gives us of it, is equally just and noble. He represents it, as an universal and invariable principle, as a law superior to all human laws, and not to be affected by the greatest human authority. It is not, says he, one thing at Rome, and another at Athens, one thing in one age of the world, and another at a different period; but it is a law so established by the supreme Ruler of the universe, as to lay all mankind, at all times, and in all places, under an eternal and inviolable obligation.

BUT we shall proceed just to mention the opinion of one writer more, in relation to this matter.

THE ingenious Mr Smith seems to be much of the same opinion with Dr Hutcheson as to the origin of morals, tho' in other respects he has done all justice to virtue. This eminent writer, in his theory of moral sentiments, * reasons upon this subject in the following manner. He observes, that it is a quality of virtue to please

* Part 6. § 3. cap. 2.

pleaſe immediately, and for its own ſake, as, on the other hand, vice as naturally diſpleaſes. But pleaſure aud pain are diſtinguiſhed, not by reaſon, but by immediate ſenſe and feeling; and from this he would ſeem to infer, that our original notions and principles of virtue, are derived from ſenſe, and not from reaſon. His premiſes muſt indeed be allowed to be true, but they do not contain the whole of the truth. Virtue may, and commonly indeed does pleaſe immediately; but this is not its only characteriſtic: it has another, which is more certain and determined, *viz.* its tendency to the production of happineſs. The immediate pleaſure which virtue produces, depends upon the temper of the obſerver; if that is bad, virtue will yield little delight. Yet, if a cruel and malicious nature, ſhould diſlike a juſt and benevolent character, ſuch character will not, for that reaſon, ceaſe to be virtuous. But it may be ſaid, that an action cannot be virtuous, unleſs it flow from a love of virtue. Be it ſo; but then the object of the affection is diſtinct from the affection itſelf, and we muſt firſt examine the natural goodneſs of the object, before we can judge of the moral goodneſs of the affection. Indeed, approbation and love, very properly enter into the principle of virtue, but they are far from conſtituting the whole of that principle, as has already been ſhown. Mere taſte in morals, is not morality; a man may be vicious

vicious notwithſtanding. Taſte may indeed enable a perſon to ſay fine things of virtue, and to repreſent it in a very amiable light, but will prove ineffectual to overcome the difficulties which often meet the practice of virtue, or to reſiſt the ſtrong allurements and temptations to vice. And of this, there are but too many examples in real life.

WE ſhall only further obſerve upon the preſent argument, that the immediate pleaſure of virtue is not that good for which it is chiefly eſtimable. This pleaſure is but private and tranſient, but the good which virtue naturally purſues, and from which it derives its peculiar excellence, is public, extenſive and permanent.

IT is from reflection upon this, that we greatly diſtinguiſh the pleaſures of virtue, when compared with pleaſures of any other kind; the pleaſures of the firſt, are not only good in themſelves, but the natural ſources of ſtill much greater good; whereas innocent pleaſures have no other end but themſelves, and the pleaſures of vice naturally iſſue in ill.

BUT we ſhall now conclude, by reducing the preceeding reaſoning within a very narrow compaſs.

WHETHER

WHETHER we conſider the eſſential principle of ſelf-love, or the perfect goodneſs of the ſupreme Ruler of the world, virtue can be nothing elſe than a principle which leads us to purſue the good of others, and to maintain and promote the happineſs and order of ſociety.

BUT tho' we can, in this manner, perfectly aſcertain the general nature of virtue, yet this would be of little uſe, without ſufficient motives to the practice of it. But ſuch motives we find ariſing from a firm perſuaſion of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the conſtitution of nature, which muſt ever be favourable to virtue. And we diſcover them more immediately in the inward principles of the heart, which are evidently of a moral make, and lead to the proper end, and happy deſtination of our nature, ſuch as are not merely a ſimple approbation of virtue, but a ſtrong ſympathy, which intereſts us in the concerns of others, a ſenſe of duty, and principle of conſcience, which pains and diſtreſſes us, when, from any other private views, we neglect the rights, and violate the juſt order of ſociety.

THESE principles are not the effects of ſelf-love, nay, as they often immediately thwart that eſſential principle, we muſt in them diſcover the manifeſt hand and intention of the Creator himſelf.

THEY

THEY are alſo plainly diſtinguiſhed from reaſon, upon which, at leaſt in their original conſtitution, they are entirely independent. They are, however, objects which reaſon can contemplate, and thereby may determine their moral goodneſs from their relation to their important end. Nay, even when they are weak or diſordered, reaſon can furniſh a remedy, not indeed immediately, but by means of ſuperior motives, which it diſcovers in contemplating the wiſdom and goodneſs of the conſtitution in general. It is in this manner only that duty and intereſt can be perfectly reconciled, an effect abſolutely neceſſary to compleat the principle of virtue.

REASON therefore diſcovers the eſſential connexion betwixt religion and virtue; and that all the other principles of the heart, receive their ſtrength and perfection from this ſuperior principle.

WE may obſerve alſo, that religion has another very happy effect; it renders the intereſts of mankind of the greateſt importance, and places every moral object in the moſt agreeable point of light, whereby virtue muſt have the moſt natural and the moſt powerful influence over the heart. Thus religion, as, on the one hand, it makes virtue neceſſary, and a matter of obligation, ſo, on the other hand, it renders the practice

tice of it, of all things, the moſt pleaſing and delightful.

UPON the whole, we may conclude with the greateſt certainty, that reaſon is of the utmoſt importance in morality. This faculty, is not only the proper judge of virtue, but takes the direction of all the inferior principles which lead to it. Hence we may diſcover the juſtneſs and propriety of theſe characters, which have ever been aſcribed to virtue, That it is a rational principle, founded chiefly in reaſon, and not in mere affection: that therefore, it is a principle applicable only to the human, and not to the brute ſpecies, altho' the affections and inſtincts of theſe laſt, are often more regular and perfect than thoſe of man. Indeed, ſo ſtrong and intimate, has the connexion betwixt reaſon and morality, always appeared, that they have been naturally tranſfuſed into one another, and wiſdom and virtue have in a manner become ſynonymous terms.

FINIS.